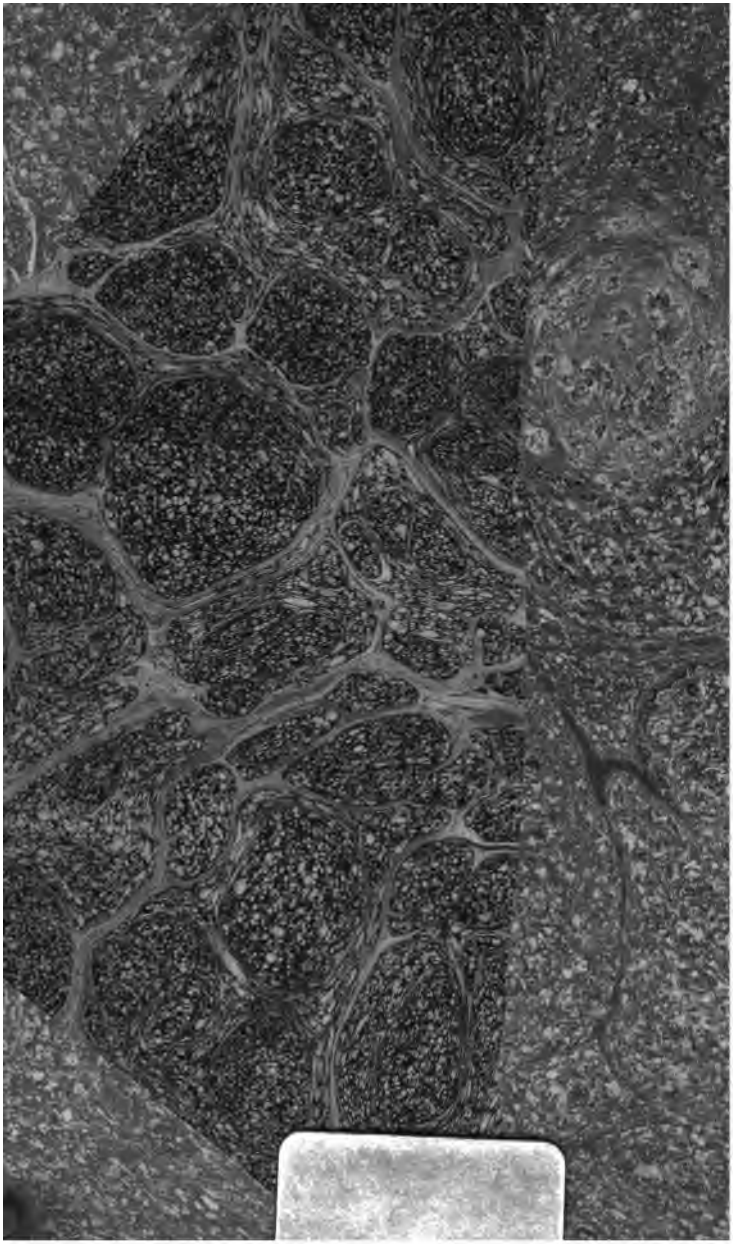

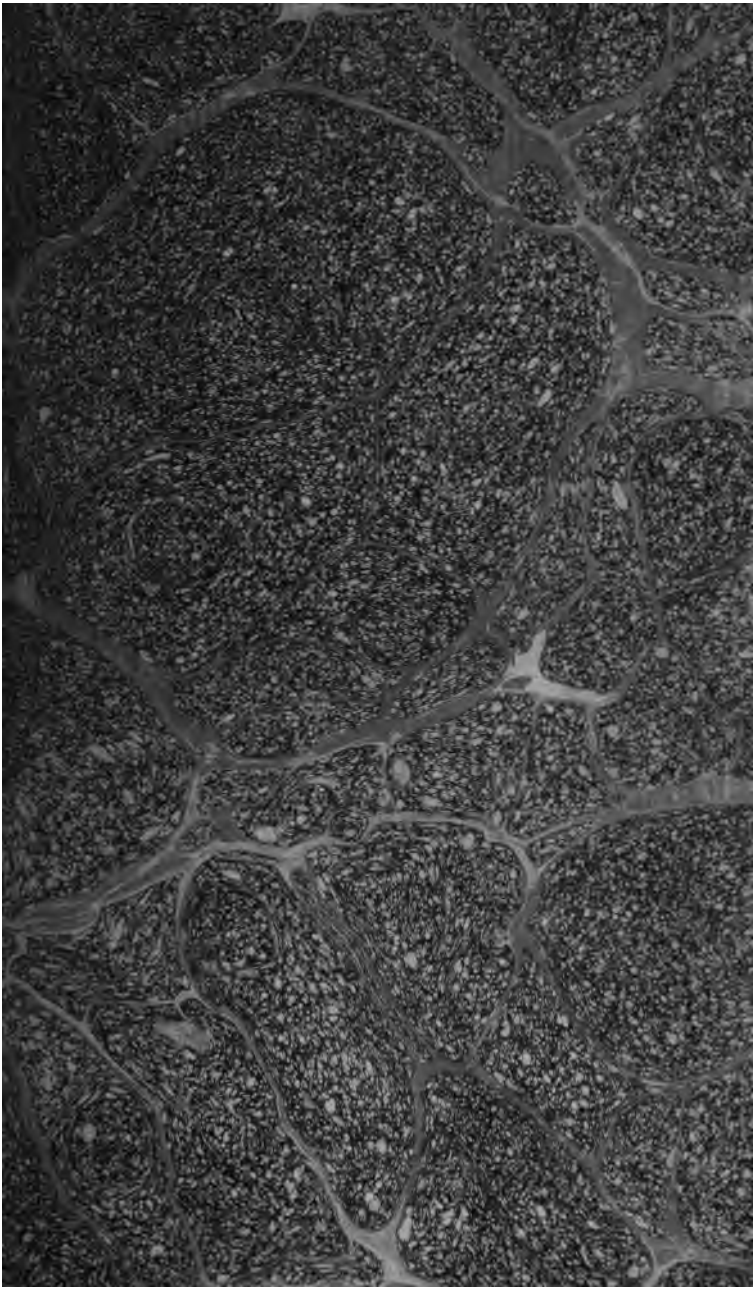

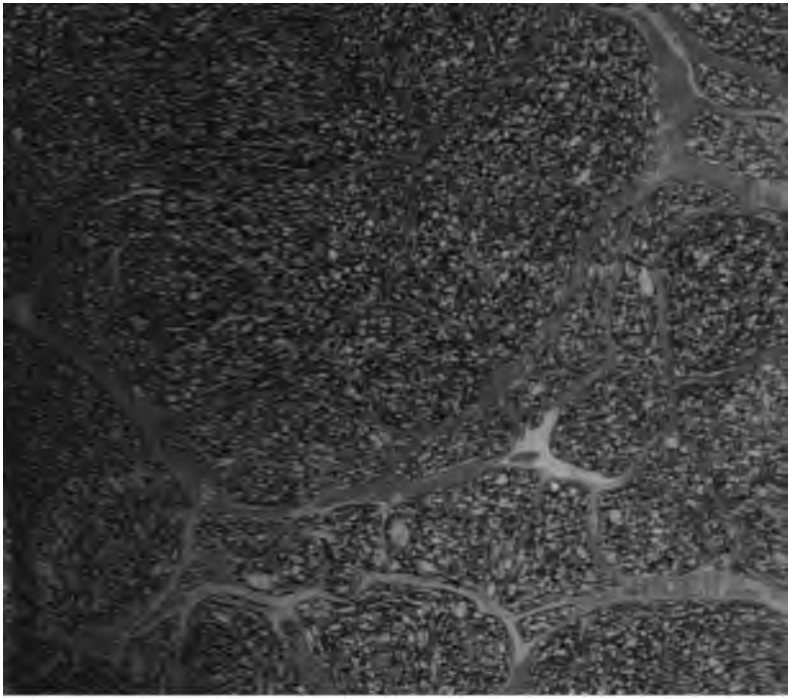

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PREFACE.

The first edition of this Miscellany, which appeared in 1790, was intended as an attempt "to comprise, within the compass of one "volume, all the most beautiful small poems "that had been published in this country "during the sixteenth and seventeenth cen-"turies;" but it was at the same time admitted, that "the completion of the publisher's "plan had been prevented by the difficulty of "procuring a sufficient stock of materials."

This difficulty has been since removed, by the kind assistance of my friends; and the work in its present state contains a selection, made with some care and attention, from a considerable number of the best poetical

libraries in this country. That it is still deficient, and that by greater industry it might have been improved, is very certain:* but the reader who shall fairly examine the stock of materials here collected, will not be much surprised if the curiosity of the compiler was at length satiated, and if the labour of transcription, became too irksome to be farther continued.

It has been objected to the former collection that it consisted, almost exclusively, of love-songs and sonnets. The objection was certainly just, but the blame cannot fairly be imputed to an editor, who must be satis-

* To what degree it is defective, the reader will be better able to judge, when Mr. Ritson shall have printed his "Bibliographia Poetica, a Catalogue of English Poets of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, with a short account of their Works." It is said to be completed, and intended for immediate publication.

fied to take such instances of literary excellence as he can find; and who, though he may lament, with his readers, that beautiful poetry is more frequently calculated to inflame the imagination, than to chasten the morals, can only lament, without being able to remedy, such a perversion of talent.

The Collection, in its present state, will be found to contain much more variety. The two parts into which it is divided are, indeed, directed to one principal object; which is, to exhibit, by means of a regular series of Specimens, the rise and progress of our language, from the tenth to the latter end of the seventeenth century. In the former part, which terminates with the reign of Henry VIII. the extracts are generally chosen with a view to picturesque description, or to the delineation of national manners; whereas the second division of the work, is meant to exhibit the best models that could be found,

in each reign, of regular and finished composition. In the former, which consists of very early fragments, it was thought that a few critical remarks, as well as biographical anecdotes, were absolutely necessary; and that these could not be given more concisely than in the form of an historical sketch: but in the latter, a short outline of the literary character of each reign, and a few notices respecting the several writers, appeared to be sufficient. To the whole is added a sort of essay on the formation and early gradations of our language, which, being little more than a repetition of some observations contained in the first volume, is perhaps superfluous; but may be convenient for the purpose of reference.

The title of these volumes will shew, that they are by no means intended to supersede Mr. Warton's very learned and entertaining, though desultory work, from which they are,

in part, abridged; but rather to serve as an useful index to his History. Neither do they interfere with the valuable modern Miscellanies of Bishop Percy, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Ritson, the late Mr. Headley, and Mrs. Cooper; from all of which they differ materially, except in the general purpose of selecting what is most valuable, from the scarcest and least accessible compositions of our early literature.

It is only necessary to add, that the Saxon Ode, which in this work will be found to differ materially from the text of Dr. Hickes, and of Gibson's Saxon Chronicle, was kindly furnished by the Rev. Mr. Henshall, who collated the printed copies with two excellent MSS. in the Cotton Library; and who had the farther complaisance to supply the literal English version, as well as the learned notes with which it is accompanied.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF POETS

FROM WHOSE WORKS EXTRACTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN THESE VOLUMES.

N. B. Such of the following dates as were capable of being exactly ascertained, are given in the body of the work: the others are only offered as an approximation, deduced in most instances from the earliest composition of each author.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

VOL. I.

		Born about
1	Robert of Gloucester,	1230
2	Robert Manning	1270
3	Adam Davie	1280
4	*Robert Langland?*	1300
5	John Gower	1326
6	John Barber	1326
7	Geoffrey Chaucer	1328
8	Andrew Wyntown	1365
9	John Lydgate	1375
10	King James I.	1395
11	Henry the Minstrel	1406
12	Juliana Berners	1440

VOL. II.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

SPECIMENS.

CONTENTS

OF VOL. I.

CHAP. IV.

CHAP. V.

Reign of Edward II.

CHAP. VI.

Reign of Edward III.

CHAP. VII.

Reign of Edward III. continued.

CHAP. VIII.

REIGN OF EDWARD III. CONTINUED.

CHAP. IX.

CHAP. X.

REIGN OF HENRY IV.

CHAP. XI.

REIGN OF HENRY V.

CHAP, XII.

REIGN OF HENRY V. CONTINUED.

CHAP. XIII.

Reign of Henry VI.

CHAP. XIV.

Reign of Henry VI. continued.

CHAP. XV.

Reign of Henry VII.

The Reader is requested to correct the following Errors, which have occurred partly in the transcribing, and partly in the printing of this Work.

Page 42, line 7, *for* Bestrairius, *read* Bestiarium.
44, — 19, *for* Walker, *read* Walter.
55, note, l. 4, *for* Chretian, *read* Chrestien.
81, line 6, *for* adopted, *read* adapted.
88, — 12, *for* lekeful, *read* likeful.
— note, l. 7, *for* cyprus, *read* cyperus.
89, line 11, *for* pirnent, *read* piment.
158, note, l. 1, *for* Anstey, *read* Crowley.
163, line 10, *for* regeman, *read* rageman.
180, — 18, *for* disputes on, *read* disputeson,
262, — 18, *for* buird, *read* buirdes.
285, — ult. *for* XI. *read* II.
286, — 14, *for* better, *read* bitter.
— — 18, *for* XI. *read* II.
287, — 10, *for* brettered, *read* bretexed.
288, — penult. *for* fitted, *read* forged.
295, — 12, *for* bother, *read* brother.
346, — 15, *for* p. 113, *read* 103.
358, — 15, *for* W. M. *read* William.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Remarks on Language.—On the Poetry of the Anglo-Saxons.—Specimen of Saxon Poetry.

THERE is, perhaps, no species of reading so popular as that, which presents a description of manners and customs considerably different from our own; and it is the frequency of such pictures, interspersed in the relations of voyages and travels, that principally recommends them to notice, and explains the avidity with which they are usually received by the public. But as the pleasure we derive from this source, must be proportionate to the degree of interest which we take in the persons described; it

is probable that a series of the works of our own ancestors, and particularly of their poetry, which, whatever may be its defects, is sure to exhibit the most correct and lively delineation of contemporary manners, would attract very general notice, if it were not considered by the greater number of readers as a hopeless attempt, to search for these sources of amusement and information, amidst the obscurity of a difficult, and almost unintelligible language.

To appreciate this difficulty, is one of the objects of the present sketch; it may therefore be proper, for the benefit of the unlearned reader, to preface it by a few general remarks on this part of the subject.

It is well known that our English is a compound of the Anglo-Saxon (previously adulterated with a mixture of the Danish), and of the Norman-French; but the proportion in which these elements were combined, at any period of our history, cannot be very easily ascertained. Hickes is of opinion, that no less than nine-tenths of our present English words are of Saxon origin; as a familiar proof of which he observes, that there are in the Lord's Prayer only three words of French or Latin extraction. On the other hand, Mr. Tyrwhitt contends that, about the time of Chaucer, "though the

form of our language was still Saxon, the *matter* was in *a great measure* French." These opinions indeed relate to such different periods, that they are not, strictly speaking, capable of being opposed to each other; but it is nearly evident that both are exaggerated: Dr. Hickes having probably imagined that he saw traces of a Gothic etymology in words which were, in fact, purely French; while Mr. Tyrwhitt, being misled by his own glossary of *obsolete* words (in which the two languages are pretty nearly balanced), has neglected to observe that the greater part of his author's text, which required no explanation, was almost solely derived from the Saxon. But, be the proportion what it may, it should seem that we ought to possess, in the various existing glossaries of the Gothic and Romance dialects, the means of recovering nearly all the original materials of our language.

It is true that these materials, in passing from the parent tongues into English, are likely to have undergone considerable changes in their appearance: it may therefore be worth while to examine, for a moment, the probable nature and extent of these alterations.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his very ingenious essay on the formation of languages, has observed, that the order in which the several kinds of words (or parts

of speech) were invented, may fairly be inferred from the degree of reasoning and abstraction which was necessary to their invention: that it was a much simpler expedient to represent what grammarians call the cases of nouns, and the moods and tenses of verbs, by varying their terminations and inflections, than to invent prepositions expressive of relation in general, or auxiliary verbs conveying the very abstract ideas of existence, possession, &c.; and, consequently, that all original languages will be found to be very complicated in their mechanism, and full of varieties of termination and grammatical intricacy, but extremely limited in the number of their elementary and radical words.

But although the speech of any nation, in which the paucity of its distinct words is thus supplied by the number of their inflections, may become perfectly applicable to every purpose; it is evident that two such languages cannot easily be amalgamated, because the radical words in each having been arbitrarily chosen, will probably be very different; their respective schemes of grammar will have been formed on different analogies; and, consequently, the number of declensions and conjugations resulting from a mixture of the two, would be almost infinite. When, therefore, a very close intercourse takes place between the natives of two countries, in

consequence of their commercial pursuits, or the operations of war and conquest, it is likely that they will be under the necessity of forming an intermediate language, whose grammatical construction shall be so simple as to be capable of admitting indifferently, from either of the component parts, as many words as it may from time to time become convenient to adopt. And observation will soon teach them, that this simplicity is easily attainable by means of the prepositions and auxiliary verbs, which are capable of being substituted for all the varieties of the ancient declensions and conjugations.

Whether this theory be universally true or not, it is perfectly evident that the expedient here mentioned has been adopted, in the formation of all the mixed European languages; from the Latin (which is supposed to be a compound of the Greek and ancient Tuscan), to that *lingua-franca*, of which the various dialects are spoken along both coasts of the Mediterranean: and that in Italy, France, and England, the scheme and mechanism of grammar has become progressively more simple, in proportion to the number of heterogeneous parts of which the respective languages have been composed.

It is remarkable that Dr. Johnson, though he has noticed, and even accurately described the

gradations by which the Saxon was insensibly melted into the English language, has considered the cause of these changes as inexplicable. "The adulteration of the Saxon tongue (says he) by a mixture of the Norman, becomes apparent; yet it is not so much altered by the admixture of new words, which might be imputed to commerce with the Continent, as by *changes of its own forms and terminations, for which no reason can be given.*" The reader, however, who shall take even a cursory survey of the extracts which gave rise to this remark, will probably be convinced, that these changes in the Saxon consist solely in the extinction of its ancient grammatical inflections, and that they are exactly similar to the alterations by which the Latin was gradually transformed into the several Romance dialects.

But it is evident that, although the new scheme of grammar was perfectly simple, and composed of few elements, yet the precise and definite use of those elements could not be suddenly established. In employing our prepositions, for instance, though we are seldom aware of the nice shades of discrimination which we observe, till the remark is forced upon us by some striking violation of the usual practice, it is certain that mere reasoning and analogy would prove very insufficient guides. When

our neighbours, the Scotch, talk of going *till* instead of *to* a place, or of asking a question *at* rather than *of* a man, we are immediately startled; without reflecting that our own practice is only founded on convention and habit. Amongst our elder writers, the use of the prepositions was, as might be expected, extremely vague and indefinite.

With the auxiliary verbs there was less difficulty; indeed the Norman, having only two words of this class, were accustomed to apply them to a greater variety of purposes than was usual with the Saxons. Hence perhaps arose the transitive use of the verb *do*, which is so frequent in our early writers; as in *do make (faire faire)* &c.; and the old Scotish poets carry their imitation of the French still farther, so as to use *doing make; done make;* &c. an employment of the verb which I do not recollect to have seen in English.

It is unnecessary to pursue these remarks any further, because the reader will find, in Mr. Tyrwhitt's "Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer," a complete analysis of our grammar, as it subsisted during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, from what has been already premised, we are perhaps authorized to conclude that, notwithstanding the pretended fluctuation of speech, a fluctuation which has been oftener supposed

than proved,* the great body of our language has continued, with very few material or intrinsic alterations, from its first formation to the present hour: and that if the study of our early writers be attended with considerable difficulty and embarrassment, these are principally to be attributed to a cause very distinct from the mere influx of new, or changes in the structure of old words.

The Saxon alphabet may be supposed to have been tolerably well suited to its purposes, because it contained five and twenty letters, besides a certain number of points, or accents, which are generally supposed to have been employed for the purpose of fixing the prosody, and distinguishing the short from the long vowels. These accents however, together with those minute delicacies of pronunciation

* It is well known that the Welch soldiers who served in our army at the siege of Bellisle (in the war of 1756), found little difficulty in understanding the language of the Bretons. The Sclavonian sailors, employed on board of Venetian ships in the Russian trade, never fail to recognize a kindred dialect on their arrival at St. Petersburgh. Many more examples might be adduced to shew that the language of a country is never destroyed but by the annihilation of its inhabitants, nor materially changed, but by their amalgamation with some other people. Indeed, all over the world, children endeavour to speak like their fathers, and it may be presumed that they seldom fail in the attempt.

which they were intended to represent, gradually fell into disuse, when the language became corrupted, first by the Danish, and afterwards by the Norman invasion: and it is to be observed that, the many new sounds which, at the latter of these periods were introduced into the language, were by no means accompanied by a correspondent number of new and distinctive signs, because the French or Latin alphabet was already familiar to the Saxons, who had adopted many of its letters, on account of their superior beauty, as early as the time of Alfred.

It has been observed by those writers who have particularly directed their attention to this subject, that in the present state of our language we have no less than thirteen distinct vowel sounds, and twenty-one modifications of those sounds, making in all thirty-four, which we express, as well as we can, by six and twenty letters: but at an earlier period of our language, when the spelling of the Norman words was intended to convey the Norman pronunciation, the deficiency of adequate signs must have been still more sensibly felt; so that our ancestors, finding it absolutely impossible to adopt any consistent mode of orthography, fairly left it to the discretion or caprice of the several writers and transcribers.

Chaucer, it seems, was perfectly aware of this inconvenience. In his address to his book he says,

" And, for there is so great diversité
" In English, and in writing of our tongue,
" So pray I to God that none mis-writé thee,
" Ne thee mis-metre for default of tongue:
" And, read whereso thou be, or ellés sung,
" *That thou be understond, God I beseech!*"

Troilus and Cress. v. 1793 to 98.

It was easier to prefer a prayer, than to suggest any human means of accomplishing the object of his wishes.

The veil which obscures the writings of our early poets cannot now be wholly removed: and perhaps, among the admirers of antiquity, there may be some who would regret its removal; because, like other veils, it leaves much to the imagination. But the present trivial work having been compiled for the convenience of indolent and cursory readers, it appeared necessary to adopt, as generally as possible, in all the extracts which are hereafter given, the orthography of the present day; not as being quite rational (which it certainly is not), but as being in some degree consistent, and fixed by custom and authority. Those obsolete words which, having

been long since elbowed out of the language by French, or Latin, or Greek substitutes, were not reducible to any definite mode of spelling; those which, having undergone a change in their vowel sounds, or in their number of syllables, could not be reformed without disturbing the rhyme or metre; and those which were so far disguised as to offer no certain meaning, have been left to that fortuitous combination of letters which the original transcribers or printers had assigned to them. All such are printed in italics, for the purpose of more easy reference to the glossarial notes, in which their meaning is explained or conjectured.

After these short preliminary observations on the language of our ancestors, it becomes necessary to say a few words concerning their poetry. This, in its spirit and character, seems to have resembled those Runic odes so admirably imitated by Mr. Gray: but its mechanism and scheme of versification, notwithstanding all the pains which Hickes has employed in attempting to investigate them, are still completely inexplicable. Mr. Tyrwhitt has justly observed, that we do not discover in the specimens of Anglo-Saxon poetry preserved by Hickes, any very studied attempts at alliteration (a species of ornament probably introduced by the Danes), nor the embellishment of rhyme, nor a

metre depending on a fixed and determinate number of syllables, nor that marked attention to their quantity which Hickes supposed to have constituted the distinction between verse and prose. Indeed, it may be observed, in addition to the arguments adduced by Mr. Tyrwhitt, that as the distinctive character of the Greek and Latin prosody was obliterated by the invasion of the northern nations, it is not probable that the original poetry of these nations should have been founded on a similar prosody; particularly, as the harmony of all the modern languages depends much more upon accent and emphasis, that is to say, upon changes in the *tone* or in the *strength* of the voice, than upon *quantity*, by which is meant the length of time employed in pronouncing the syllables. Upon the whole, it must still remain a doubt, whether the Anglo-Saxon verses were strictly metrical, or whether they were only distinguished from prose by some species of rythm: to a modern reader it will certainly appear, that there is no other criterion but that which is noticed by Mr. Tyrwhitt, namely, "*a greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march.*" The variety of inflection, by which the Anglo-Saxon language was distinguished from the modern English, gave to their poets an almost unlimited power of inversion; and they used it

almost without reserve: not so much perhaps for the purpose of varying the cadence of their verse, as with a view to keep the attention of their hearers upon the stretch, by the artificial obscurity of their style; and to astonish them by those abrupt transitions which are very commonly (though rather absurdly) considered as Pindaric, and which are the universal characteristic of savage poetry.

That the reader may be enabled to judge for himself concerning the truth of all the foregoing observations, he is here presented with a specimen of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The only liberty which has been taken with it, is that of substituting the common characters instead of the Saxon; and a literal translation is added, for the purpose of shewing the variety of inversions in which the Saxon poets so much delighted. But as such a translation is very ill calculated to convey the spirit of a poetical original, I am happy in being enabled, by the kindness of a friend, to subjoin a second, and metrical version. This was written several years ago, during the controversy occasioned by the poems attributed to Rowley, and was intended as an imitation of the style and language of the fourteenth century. The reader will probably hear with some surprize, that this singular instance of critical ingenuity was the composition of an Eton school-boy.

AN ODE ON ÆTHELSTAN'S VICTORY,

From Two MSS. in the Cottonian Library, British Museum, Tiberius, B. iv. and Tiberius, A. vi. dated in the Year 937—in Gibson's Chronicle, and Hickes's Saxon Grammar, in the Year 938—and supposed to be written by a contemporary Bard.

SAXON ORIGINAL.

Her Æthelstan cyning,
Eorla drihten,
* Beorna beah [1] gifa, [2]
And his broðor eac,

* The asterisks shew the alliterations.

[1] *Bellic* is bolline. Mur. xv. 49. in the Rushworth Glossa. and *beah* varies little in sound from *aun*.

[2] White, in his Etymol. p. 345. gives *gear*, *Danisc.* and thence deduces our corresponding *Dag.* *Gaiaro.* &c. *g* and

This celebrated ODE is rendered into English, as literally as possible, to show the very great affinity between our present Language and its Saxon forefather, which, it is hoped, will be admitted as an excuse for some occasional obscurity.

LITERAL RENDERING.

Here Athelstan King,
Of Earls the Lord,
Of Barons the bold chief,
And his brother eke,

c are certainly letters of the same organ; and in Saxon *cafre* and *cafost*, are chiefer, chiefest; and Matt. xxvii. 57, Gothic, *gabigs* is applied to Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable man.

Eadmund Ætheling[3]
Ealdor langne tyr,[4]
* Geslogon æt sæcce,
Sweorda ecgum,
Ymbe Brunanburh.
Heord weal clufan,
* Heowan heatholindga,
Ha mera[5] lafum,
Eaforan Eadwardes.

Swa him gaæthele[6] wæs,
Fram cneo[7] mægum,
Thæt hi æt campe oft,
With lathra[8] gehwæne,[9]
Land geal[10] godon ;[11]

[3] *Æthel*, *hæleth*, *halettan*, *cilt*, *clyto*, on Mr. Whiter's elementary Principle, are all deducible from *l*, *t*, disregarding the vowels, and the Latin *altus*, *inclytus*, Greek κλυτος, our exalted, lofty, &c. Ætheling is the young Æthel, or noble.

[4] *Thrym*, derived from *turma*, is the common term for a train, and the Saxons sometimes added, frequently omitted, the *m* final; and in English *tier*, as tier of guns, a row, a long line of ancestors.

[5] The *marches* of Wales and the North of England elucidate this term to an English reader, but it is derived from the Gothic MARKOS, Mat. ix. 34, where *mær* is the corresponding Saxon, and signifies *marks* defining boundaries.

Edmund Atheling,
Elders a long train,
Slew in the shock (*of war*)
With the edges of swords
Round Brunangburgh.
They cloven the hard walls,
They hew the lofty ones,
The marches (*borders*) they leave,
As aforen in Edward's days.

So to them it destined was,
From their mighty kindred,
That they at camp oft,
Gainst robbers on each side,
Their land wholly cleared;

[6] *Th* and *d* are the same letter in Saxon; and in Cædmon, whose style alone resembles this Ode, there is *adæled*, portioned, destined, and *dal*, Saxon, and *dalgs*, Gothic, are common terms for *portion* or *lot*, synonimous with the modern *deal*.

[7] This word corresponds with *cyn*, *genus*, and certainly the *knees* of Gibson conveys no appropriate idea.

[8] The Latin *latro*.

[9] Each whence, literally.

[10] *Geall* is *all*, in the Lambeth Psalter, Ps. lxv. 15.

[11] Geaton is found for *to get*, in the Saxon Chronicle, An. 655, 675, 963.

Hord and hamas
Heted crungon.[12]

Scotta leode,[13]
And scip flotan,
* Feage feollon.
Feld dernode,
* Secga[14] swate,
* Siththan sunne up
On morgen tid;
Mære tungol,
* Glad ofer grundas,
Godes candel, beorht,
Eces drihtnes,
Oth se æthele gesceaft[15]
* Sahto setle.

Thær læg secg monig,
Garum ageted,[16]
Guman[17] northærne
* Ofer scyld sceoten,

[12] This may be derived from *ragian*, regere, Goth. Luc. ii. 2.

[13] This word is retained in the English *lad*, and the Scotch *laddies*.

[14] General name for soldiers; and our old English word *segge*, *a man*.

Their hoards, and homes,
Nobly ruling.

The Scottish lads,
And the men of the fleet,
In fight fell.
The field dinned,
The soldiers swat,
Sith that the sun up,
On morning tide;
The major twinkler,
Glided o'er the grounds,
God's candle bright,
Eke so the Lord's,
Until this handy-work of the high,
Sought his setting.

There lay soldiers many,
Their gore flowing out,
Northern men
O'er their shields shot,

[15] Whatever is created, shaped.

[16] *Ageotenne*, Ps. xiii. 6, where the Trinity College MS. has *scedende* to *shed*, to *go out*; Gothic, *giutid*.

[17] *Ghomo*, homo, pronounced with their favourite *g*, or *ge*: in Gothic, Luc, xix. 2, *guma*.

* Swylce Scyttisc eac
* Werig wiges read.[18]

Wes-Seaxe forth
Andlangne dæg,
Eorod cystum
On last lægdon
Lathum theodum.
Heowan heora flyman,
Hindan thearle,[19]
Mecum[20] mycel scearpum.

Myrce ne wyrndon.[21]
Heardes hand to plegan.[22]
Hæleth a nanum
Thæra the mid Anlafe
Ofer mæra gebland,[23]
On lides[24] bosme,
Land gesohton,
Fæge to gefeohte.

[18] The MS. Tiberius, A. vi. gives *read*, not *sæd*, the printed reading.

[19] Here to *thrill* or *drill*, as Exod. xxi. 6. *thirlie his eare mid anum æle*, "drill his ear with an awl," a custom retained by our forefathers, and executed on their slaves at the church door.

[20] The Trinity College MS. supplies us with the derivation

So Scotch men eke,
Red with worrying war.

The West-Saxon forth (*army*)
All the long day,
(A chosen herd,)
On the last laid
Of the loathed people.
They hew their fleeing men,
The hind ones pierce
With swords mickle sharp.

The Mercians (*were*) not wearied
Hard hands to ply.
Health aye (*was*) none
To them who with Anlaff
O'er the seas blown were,
On the bosom of the waves,
The land they sought,
Foe to fight.

of this word, Ps. xvi. 14, giving *meche* where another has *sword:* the first syllable of the Greek μαχαιρα or μαχη.

[21] Bede uses the word in this sense, 533, 31.

[22] Alfred in his Translation of Boethius gives *plegian*, to brandish.

[23] *Gebleow*, Rushworth Gloss. John. xx. 22.

[24] This probably is an error for *ythe*, the common word for waves.

Fife lagon
On tham campstede,
Cyningas uinga
* Swordum aswefede,[25]

Swylce seofene eac
Eorlas Anlafes.
Unrim[26] herges,[27]
Flotan and Scotta,
Thær geflymed wearth.

Northmanna bregu[28]
Nyde, gebæded
To lides[29] stefne,[30]
Litle werede[31]
Cread[32] cnear on
Flot cyning,

[25] *Swebban*, Cædmon; *b*, *f*, and *p*, are letters of the same organ, and *asurpan*, swept away, Lye. The Greek, π ϛ φ.

[26] *Unrim*, unnumbered, from innumerus; *n*, *r*, *m*, the commanding consonants, the same as *rim* is *numerus*, the termination *us* dropped.

[27] This word implies *Harrassers*, according to *Lye*, from *hergian*, to harrow. The Gothic *hargis*, a legion.

[28] This word proves beyond the possibility of doubt, that *b* and *f* are used indiscriminately by Saxon writers; for *bregyd* is frequently used for *fregyth*, *frighted*, here literally the *frighter*, as in the Gothic, Mar. v. 42, *faurhtei*.

Five lay
On the camp-stead,
Of kings the young
By swords swept away.

So seven eke
The earls of Anlafe.
Unnumbered harrassers,
Of the fleet and Scotch,
There to flee made were.

Of North-men the terror
By need forced, bidded
With a loud stefen, (*voice*)
His remaining warriors,
For to crowd near on,
The fleet of the king,

[29] *Luddor* is louder, Chr. Sax. An. 654, though *lud* is more generally transmitted with the aspirate *h*, *hlud*.

[30] *Steven* is a common term for *voice*, even in Chaucer.

[31] The modern *warred*, engaged in *waging* war. Vide *weored*, Lye's Dictionary.

[32] *Cread*, a crowd, Lye; here used as a verb.

Ungewar on ieolene [32] ihad, [33]
Feorh generede. [34]

Swilce thaer eac se frodha [35]
Mid theame com on his cythrhe
Nordh Constantinus.
Har Hyldierine,
Hryman ne thorfte.
Meerga gemanana,
He wæs his mæga.

Sceard freonda
* Gefylled on folc-stede,
Forebeslagen æt seerge.
And his sunu forlet
On wæl stowe,
Wundum forgrunden.

Geongne Æthguthe,
Gylpan ne thorfte,
Beorn bland en-feax,
Bill geslihtes,
Eald in wuda.

[32] *Feoll*, fell. Deut. ix. 18.
[33] Luc. vi. 49. *flod.* Sax.-Goth. *aqua flodar.*
[34] *Gener* is the general term for a place of refuge.

Out-going on falling flood,
Far escaped.

So there eke the prudent
With flight came to his country,
The northern Constantine.
The hoary Hilderic,
To scream not throve it, (*availed not*)
Much bemoan,
He did his mates.

Short (*few*) friends
Filled his folk-stead,
Fore-slain they were at the shock.
And his son was left,
On the wailfull stow, (*field*)
With wounds weltering on the ground.

The young Ætguth
To bewail availed not,
His barons bold in fight,
Slaughtered by the bill,
Old in wisdom.

[36] *Froda* is the Gothic *frods*, Mat. vii. 24, the Latin *prudens*, *p* changed into *f*—*f*, *r*, *d*, *s*, commanding consonants.

Ne Anlaf the ma,
Mid hyra here leafum,
Hlihhan ne thorftan,
Thæt hi beado[37] weorca
Beteran wurdon
On camp-stede.

Cumbol[38] gehnastes,
Gar[39] mittunge[40]
Gumena gemotes,
Wæpen ge wrixles[41]
Thæs the hi on wæl felda
With ead[42] weardes,
Afaran plegodan.

Gewiton[43] him tha Northmen,
Dæggled on garum,
Dreorig dare tha laf.
On duniges mere,
Ofer deopne wæter,
Dyflen secan,

[37] *Bate* is the term for contention; and *beat*, to beat.

[38] *Cumbol* sounds as *symbel*, assembly.

[39] *Gar* is great, as *gar*, *segg*, Oros. I. 1. the Ocean, *great sea*.

[40] *Mittunge* and *gemotis* are from the same source, the Gothic *motastada*, Luc. v. 27, the *Moot-stadt*, place of meeting.

[41] This is generally used for *exchange*, and is the word in

Nor Anlaff the more,
With the left (*remainder*) of the army,
To laugh not throve it,*
That they battles work
Better wrought
In camp-stead.

At assembly the nighest,
The great meeting
Of the men of the motes,†
Weep the ransoms
Of those that they on wail-field
Guarded by an oath,
Aforen pledged.

Quit them the Northmen
With tackled gear, (*with sails repaired*)
Dreary those the left. (*the remainder*)
On the dingy sea,
Over deep waters,
Dublin they seek,

that passage of the Evangelist, " what shall a man give in *exchange* for his soul." Math. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 37.

[42] *Ead* and *eath*, an oath.

[43] This word pronounced, sounds as *quitten*.

* To laugh—to boast, availed not.

† Ward-*motes* is still in constant use to express a meeting of the principal inhabitants of the ward.

Eft yra land,
Æwi scamode.

Swylce tha gebrothor,[44]
Bege ætrunne,[45]
Cyning and Etheling,
Cyththe sohton;
West-Seaxna land.

Wiges hremige
Lætan him behindan.
Hra Bryttinga,
Salowig padan,
Thone sweartan hræfan
Hyrnet nebban,
And thone hasu-wadan earn,
Æftan hwit æses brucan;
Grædigne cuth haofoc,
And thæt grege deor,
* Wulfon wealde.

Ne wearth wæl mare
On thisne iglande,

[44] *Gedecan* is to *deck, thatch*, cover.

[45] Gibson reads *ætsunne*, but *Tiberius* A vi. *ætrunne, togetheren.*

Afterwards their land,
Each where shamed.

So also the brothers,
Both together,
The King and Atheling,
Their country sought;
West-Saxon land.

The war screamers,
Left they behind.
The hoarse bittern,
The sallow paddock,
The swarth raven
With horned nib,
And the house-wooding* heron,
Eating white fish of the brooks;
The greedy gos-hawk,
The grey deer,
And wolf wild.

Never was there wail more,
In this island,

* That builds his house in the loftiest woods.

(Æfre gita
* Folces gefylled)
Beforan thyssum
Swordes ecgum.
(Thæs the us secgath[46] bec
Ealde uth witan.)
Siththan eastan hider,
Engle and Seaxe,
Up becomon.
* Ofer brade briniu,
Britene sohton.
Wlance wig smithas,
Weales ofer comon
Eorlas arhwæte,
Eard begeaton.

[46] This rendering is confirmed by the Heptateuch of Thwaites, p. 162.

(Ever since
By folkes filled)
Before this
By sword's edge.
(Thus they that seek books,
Elders of the witens,) *
Since that the easterns hither,
Angles and Saxons,
Up became. (*arrived*)
O'er the broad brine (*sea*)
Britain they sought.
Smiting with lances,
The Welch they conquered,
The earls harrowed,
The earth gotten. (*the land obtained.*)

* Thus it is related by the Clerks, the learned.

METRICAL VERSION OF THE FOREGOING POEM.

The mightiest of alle manne,
Was the gude kinge Athelstan.
Alle his knytis to hir medis
Weren riche and ryal wedis.
Edmond his brother, was a knyt
Comelich, brave, and fair to syht.
At Brunenbruc in stour they faught;
Fiercer fray was never wraught.
Maille was split, and helmis roven,
The wall of shieldis down they cloven:
The Thanis which cold with Edmond fare
To meet the fomen well were yare.
For it was comen to hem of kynde
Hir londis and tresoúrs to fend.

The kempis, whych was of Irlond,
On ilka daie, on ilka strond,
Weted with blude, and wounded, fell
Rapely smatin with the stell.
Grislich on the grund they groned;
Aboven, alle the hyls resounéd.

What for laboúr, and what for hete,
The kempis swate til they wer wete.
From morrow til the close of day,
Was the tyme of that journée.

Monie mon from Dacie sprong
The deth tholid, I underfong.
The Scottis fell in that bataille,
Whyche wer forwerid of travaille.
The West Saxonis wer ware,
When their foen away wold fare;
As they fled they did hem sewe
Wyth ghazand swerdis, that wel couth hew.
The cokins they n'olden staie,
For thir douten of that fraye.

The Mercians fought, I understond;
There was gamen of the hond.
Alle that with Anlaff hir way nom,
Over the seas in the shippes wome,
And the five sonnes of the kynge,
Fel mid dint of swerd-fightinge.
His seven erlis died alswo;
Many Scottes wer killed tho.
The Normannes, for their migty bost,
Went hame with a lytyl host.

The kynge and frode syked sore
For hir kempis whyche wer forlore.
The kynge and frode to schyppe gan flee,
Wyth mickel haste, but hir meguie.
Constantine gude, and Anlaff,
Lytyl bost hadde of the laif.
Maie he nat glosen, ne saie
But he was right wel appaie.
In Dacie of that gaming
Monie wemèn hir hondis wring.
The Normannes passed that rivere,
Mid hevy hart, and sory chere.
The brothers to Wessex yode;
Leving the crowen, and the tode,
Hawkes, doggis, and wolves tho;
Egles, and monie other mo,
With the ded men for their mede
On hir corses for to fede.

Sen the Saxonis first come
In schippes over the sea-fome,
Of the yeres that ben forgone,
Greater bataile was never none.

CHAPTER II.

The same Subject continued.—Account of Norman Poets in England.

It has been seen, that although the great mass of our language is derived from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, the mechanism and structure of our poetry is to be referred to some other source; and it is generally supposed that all the modes of versification now in use, were borrowed from the French, who appear to have adopted them, together with the ornament of rhyme, in imitation of the Latin monkish versifiers. To whom we should ascribe the original invention of this ornament, is not quite so certain. Fauchet claims it for his countrymen; but as he founds their pretensions on the Frankish translation of the scriptures by Otfrid, a monk of Weissembourg, who wrote about the year 870, succeeding antiquaries have opposed to this authority the superior antiquity of the Latin specimens, some of which are to be referred to the sixth century. This date is certainly anterior even to any that can be assigned to the Runic ode,

called Elgill's Ransom, which has been translated by Dr. Percy in his specimens of Runic poetry, and affords, perhaps, the earliest example of rhyme in any modern language. But on the other hand it may be fairly argued, that as our stock of northern literature is very incomplete, we cannot draw any positive conclusion from the deficiency of specimens among the works of the Scalds:—that rhyme, which certainly is not congenial to Latin verse, may have been a natural appendage to a system of versification less strictly metrical; and that, as the date of its original introduction into Latin can only be conjectured, it is not more absurd to ascribe it to some northern proselyte, desirous of bestowing on the learned language an ornament which he admired in his own, than to suppose it was invented by the Italian monks, as a succedaneum for that regular prosody, the harmony of which had been lost in the corrupt pronunciation of the barbarous conquerors of Italy.

But be this as it may, the Norman poets were certainly our immediate masters: to them we owe the forms of our verse; and translations from them were among the earliest compositions of the English language; so that some notice of them is necessary to connect the links of our literary history.

Indeed it has not been sufficiently considered

that there was a period, and that of considerable duration, during which the English language did not exist, or at least was not, and could not be applicable to any literary purpose. The language of the church was Latin; that of the king and nobles, Norman; that of the people, Anglo-Saxon: the Anglo-Norman jargon was only employed in the commercial intercourse between the conquerors and the conquered. It was likely to be composed almost entirely of synonymous terms, which evidently can only encumber, without enriching the speech of any nation; and that this was the case, is proved by our existing language, in which the names of the necessaries of life, as ox and beef, sheep and mutton, flesh and meat, besides many other words of frequent recurrence, had originally an identical meaning. This state of things would necessarily continue so long as the Norman and Anglo-Saxon people were separated by mutual hatred and prejudice; and their languages could only be amalgamated into one common and consistent form of speech, when the conquerors and the conquered became confounded in the same mass, by intermarriages, and by a general unity of interest. Hence, the Norman and Anglo-Saxon, which for some time existed in England as distinct and rival tongues, have long since disappeared;

while, from a series of opposite causes, the Welch has continued to the present day; and it is probable that, by a careful examination of our political and legal history alone, we might be able to trace the gradations of our language with tolerable accuracy. In the mean time it is impossible not to see, that a great deal too much has been attributed to the personal character of the Conqueror, and that historians have ascribed, to particular parts of his policy, effects directly opposite to those which they were naturally calculated to produce.

We are told, for instance, that William hated and determined to eradicate the language of this island, and to introduce the Norman in its place; and this has been so often repeated, that Mr. Tyrwhitt has thought it necessary to refute the assertion by the authority of Ordericus Vitalis, a contemporary historian, who tells us, that William had, in fact, taken great pains to acquire the Anglo-Saxon. But surely, the absurdity of the charge is its best refutation. William must have known, that the Franks who conquered Gaul, and his own ancestors who subdued Neustria, had not been able to substitute the Teutonic for the Romance language in their dominions; that the measure was not at all necessary to the establishment of their power; and that such an attempt is, in all cases,

no less impracticable than absurd, because the patient indocility of the multitude must ultimately triumph over the caprice and tyranny of their armed preceptors. But, having conquered a kingdom, and wishing to retain his conquest, he introduced a code of laws which placed his power on a military basis; and he introduced it in the language in which it was originally compiled, and which was familiar to that army to which he looked for his security. By encouraging the study of French in the schools, he gave his subjects the means of understanding the laws which he expected them to obey. He did this, perhaps, tyrannically and harshly; but it is not proved that he did it with the view of making the Norman the universal language of his subjects, or that he expected them, at their return from school, to talk French in their own families: he might, with equal wisdom, have supposed that they would converse habitually in Latin, which they learnt in the same schools. Even during the reign of Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxon had ceased to be cultivated; and after the conquest, it was sure to become more and more barbarous, because it was the language of an oppressed and enslaved people; but it continued to exist. Indeed, the obscurity of our earliest poets is well known to arise from this source; and the great influx of

French words which was ultimately introduced, and thus formed, the Anglo-Norman or English language, was so far from being a consequence of the tyrannical policy of the Conqueror, that it was most rapid at the very period when that policy was abandoned; that is to say, a little before the time of Minot, Gower, and Chaucer; and was the natural result of the increasing intercourse between the Norman nobles and their English vassals.

In the mean time, the English monarchs were the most liberal, and, perhaps, the earliest patrons of French poetry; indeed we are told by a correct and diligent antiquary, M. de la Rue, Royal Professor of History in the University of Caen (V. Archæologia, Vol. XII. pages 50 and 297, for his able dissertations on this subject,) that "IT WAS FROM ENGLAND AND NORMANDY THAT THE FRENCH RECEIVED THE FIRST WORKS WHICH DESERVE TO BE CITED IN THEIR LANGUAGE." The historians of Provence have assigned to the first specimens of their poetry, a very high degree of antiquity; but La Combe, in his short account of the French poets prefixed to the second volume of his Dictionn. du Vieux Langage, supposes the earliest troubadours of eminence, William Count of Poitiers, and Raymond Count of Thoulouse, to have flourished in 1071 and 1092, so that the only

known poet confessedly anterior to the reign of William the Conqueror, is Thibaut de Vernon, Canon of Rouen, who translated, from Latin into French verse, the lives of Wandril and some other saints, held in reverence by the Normans.

The next names with which we become acquainted, are those of the minstrel TAILLEFER, who is said to have been the first person that broke into the English ranks at the battle of Hastings; and of BERDIC, another French minstrel attached to the Conqueror, by whom he was rewarded with the gift of three parishes in Gloucestershire. The succeeding reign was principally distinguished by numbers of *serventois*, or satyrical songs, from which it is not improbable that Robert of Gloucester may have borrowed his sarcasms against William Rufus: but we do not possess any monuments of the poetry of this early period, nor have the names of the writers been transmitted to posterity.

The first Anglo-Norman poet mentioned by M. de la Rue, is PHILIPPE DE THAN. He composed, for the use of the clergy, a didactic French poem, under the title of "LIBER DE CREATURIS;" it is a treatise of practical chronology, full of erudition, and dedicated to his uncle *Humphrey de Than*, Chaplain to *Hugh Bigod*, who became Seneschal to Henry I. in the year 1107, soon after which

the poem appears to have been written. His next work is entitled LE BESTIAIRE, dedicated to Adelaide de Louvain, who was married to Henry I. in 1121, so that the poem must have been written after that time. It is a treatise on beasts, birds, and precious stones, translated from a Latin essay called *Bestiairius*, a manuscript copy of which still remains in the library of Mr. Douce, F. A. S. Both these works are to be found in the British Museum. MSS. Cotton. Nero. A. v. "With respect to the kind of poetry which Phillippe de Than has used, (says M. de la Rue) we believe it would be difficult to find any authors who have adopted it. His method does not consist in making one line rhyme with another, but one half with another half, as,

"Al busuin est truved, l'ami é epruved,
"Unches ne fud ami, qui al busuign failli," &c.

But this mechanism of verse, which he borrowed from the Latin versifiers of his time, and in which he has had no imitators among the French poets, became very popular among the English. It is adopted in the old metrical tale of King Horn, and in many other works. Indeed, if we write the two hemistiches as separate verses, we obtain that form of verse of which Skelton was so fond, and which,

from its frequent application to metrical romances, was usually called the minstrel-metre.

SAMSON DE NANTEUIL translated the Proverbs of Solomon into French verse, at the instance of Adelaide de Condi, whom he calls his *Lady*. She was wife of Osbert de Condé, and proprietor of Horn-castle in Lincolnshire, which was forfeited to the crown in the last year of Stephen's reign. The composition of the poem was probably, by a few years, anterior to this event: it is written in eight-syllable verse, and is to be found in the British Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 4388.

GEOFFROI GAIMAR is known by a metrical history of the Anglo-Saxon kings, continued to the reign of William Rufus. This however is, apparently, only part of a larger work, comprehending the whole history of Britain; since the author declares that he had begun his poem with the Argonautic expedition, and had amended and corrected the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, by means of two MSS. which he cites. It appears from clear internal evidence, that this work must have been written as early as the year 1146. It is in verses of eight syllables, which possess uncommon facility and elegance. The only known copy is in the British Mus. Bibl. Reg. 13. A. xxi. in which it is placed as a continuation of Wace's Brut d'Angleterre.

DAVID is mentioned by Gaimar as his contemporary, and as a trouveur of considerable eminence: but his works are now lost.

The next poet in the order of time is the celebrated ROBERT WACE: he was a native of Jersey, born in the reign of Henry I. whom he professes to have seen. He commenced his studies at *Caen*, and returned thither after having completed his education in France. The order of time in which he composed his several works cannot be correctly ascertained, but it is probable that the *Brut d'Angleterre*, which he finished in the year 1155, is the earliest of those that have come down to us. It is a French metrical version of the History of Britain from the time of the imaginary Brutus to the reign of Cadwallader, A. D. 689, which Geoffrey of Monmouth had previously translated into Latin prose, from the British original imported from Bretagne by Walker, Archdeacon of Oxford. *Layamon* and *Robert de Brunne*, made use of Wace's work for their English poetical versions; and lastly, *Rusticien de Pise* translated it into French prose. There are several copies of the Brut still remaining; three in the British Museum, viz. Bib. Reg. 13. A. xxi. and MSS. Cott. Vitellius A. x. both of the 13th century; and MSS. Harl. No. 6508 of the 14th: a copy (likewise of the 14th century) in

the library of Bennet College, Cambridge; and a superb folio, supposed to be coeval with Wace, in the Royal Library at Paris.

Although a French quotation may have an aukward appearance in a treatise exclusively dedicated to English poetry, I shall venture to lay before my readers a specimen of Wace's *Brut*; partly for the purpose of interrupting the dry and uninteresting catalogue of names of which the present chapter is composed; and partly, because this piece of imaginary history having employed the pens of so many successive writers, it may be entertaining to compare their several styles in treating the same subject. The following extract is taken from Wace's description of the ceremonies and sports at King Arthur's coronation; and the corresponding passages from Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, will be given in the two next chapters.

* Quand li service fut finé,
Et ITE MISSA EST chanté,
Li roi a sa corone ostée,
Qu'il avoit au *mostier* [1] portée,
Une corone *menor* [2] prist:
Et la reine *ensement* [3] prist.

* MS. Harl. 6508.

[1] Monastery. [2] Mineure, smaller. [3] At the same time.

Jus mistrent les *greignors*[1] ators,
Plus legiers pristrent, et menors.
Quand li roi torna del mostier,
A son palais ala manger.
La reine à une autre ala
Et les dames *o sei*[2] mena.
Li roi mangea avec les homes,
Et la reine avec les dames
O[3] grant *deduist*[4] et grant joye
Come soloit estre à Troie :
Et Bretons encor la tenoent
Quant ensemble *feist*[5] feisoent
Li roi et les homes mangoent,
Que nule fame n' i menoent :
Les dames mangoent aillors,
N' i avoit que lor servitors.

Quant li roi fut au deis assiz,
A la costume del païs,
Assiz sont les barons entor ;
Chescun en l'ordre de *s'enor*.[6]
Li senescal Kei avoit nom,
Vestu d'un ermine pelliçon,
Servi à son mangier li roy,
Mil gentilzhomes avec soi,

[1] Greater. They laid down their greater and heavier garments. [2] O sei, avec soi. [3] With.
[4] Pleasure. [5] Fête, feast. [6] Son honneur,—his rank.

Qui *tuiz* [1] furent vestus d'ermine,
Cil servirent à la *quesine.* [2]
Sovent aloent, et *espez* [3]
Esqueles [4] portant, et mes.
BEDUER, de l'autre partie,
Servi de la boteillerie.
Ensemble o li, mil damoisealz,
Vestuz d'ermine, *genz, et bealx,* [5]
O copes et o pos [6] d'or fin
Et o *henas* [7] porteient vin,
N'i avoit home qui servist,
Qui d'ermine ne se vestit.
Beduer devant euls aloit,
Que la cope li roi portoit,
Li damoiseals après aloent,
Qui les barons de vin servoent.
La reine *ost* [8] ses servanz
Ne vos sai dire quenz ne quanz [9]
Richement, et bel fut servie,
Le (roi) et toute sa compagnie.
Mult veisez riche vesele,
Qui mult *ert* [10] riche et mult bele,
Et de manger riche servise,
Et de *beivre* [11] en mainte guise,

[1] Tous. [2] Cuisine, [3] Epais—thickly crouded. [4] Ecuelles. [5] Gentils et beaux. [6] Cups and pots. [7] Hanaps—tankards. [8] Eut. [9] I cannot tell who, nor how many. [10] Erat—was. [11] Boire.

Ne puis, ne ne sei nomer
Ne les richesses aconter.
Mult ost à la cort jugleors,
Chanteors, et *rumenteors.*[1]
Mult poissez oir chançons,
Rotuenges,[2] et *voialx*[3] sons,
Vileors,[4] lais, et notez,
Laïz de *vieles,*[5] laiz de *rotez,*[6]
Laiz de harpez, laiz de *fietealx,*[7]
Lires,[8] *tempes,*[9] et chalemealx,
Symphonicz,[10] *psalterions,*[11]
Monacors,[12] des *cymbes,*[13] *chorons.*[14]
Assez i ot *tregetours,*[15]
Joierresses, et joieors[16]

[1] Rhymers? [2] Songs played on the *rote*. This is thought to have been the modern *vielle*, used by the Savoyards in our streets.

[3] *Voialx* sons, sons voyaux, probably mean *vocal* songs.

[4] Vileors, are probably players on the *viele* or violin.

[5] Lays accompanied by the fiddle.

[6] Lays accompanied by the rote or *vielle*.

[7] These seem to have been a sort of flute.

[8] Probably some variety of the harp.

[9] Drums. [10] Another sort of drum. Vide Sir J. Hawkins, Hist. Mus. 11. 284, 5. [11] Dulcimers.

[12] The monochord. [13] Cymbals. [14] A sort of trumpet.

[15] Jugglers. See Tyrwhitt's note on V. 11453. Cant. Tales.

[16] Probably the *timbesteres* or *tumbesteres* mentioned by Chaucer. See Tyrwhitt's glossary; *joieors* are apparently also jugglers.

Li uns, disoent contes, et fables;
Auquant,[1] demandoent dez et tablez.
Tielx joient au hasart;
C'estoit un gieu de male part.
As Eschiez joient plusors,
Ou à la *mine*,[2] *au gieu majors*[3]
Dui et dui[4] au gieu s'escompaignent
Li uns perdent, li autres gaignent.
Cil enjuent qui plus getent;
As autres dient qu'ils y metent.
Sor gages emprestent deniers,
Unze por douze volontiers.
Sovent jurent, sovent affichent,
Gages prenent, gages plenissent;
Mult estrivent, mult se courroucent—*
Telx i puest soiez vestu,
Qui au partir se lieve nu.

[1] Aucuns, some.

[2]—[3] In the Cotton MS. Vitell. A. x. the line stands thus, "A la mine u al greignor." Both readings seem to indicate two games played with tables, and distinguished as the *greater* and *the less*; but whether they were species of backgammon or draughts, is uncertain.

[4] Two and two.

* I have omitted the remainder of this passage, which I thought rather tedious; perhaps, because it is not easily intelligible. The transition from this subject to Arthur's presents, is rather sudden.

Dona *déduis,*[1] dona *belez,*[2]
Dona *livriers,*[3] dona *brochiers*[4]
Dona pelliçon, dona henaps,
Dona peilez, dona anealx,
Dona bliaux, dona mantealx,
Dona lances, dona espées,
Dona *saites barbeléez;*[5]
Dona coivres, dona escus,
Ars, et espéez bien esmolus;
Dona li dars, et dona ors,
Dona *lorains, et chaceurs;*[6]
Dona hauberz, dona destriers,
Dona heaumes, dona deniers;
Dona argent, et dona or,
Dona le mielx de son trésor.
N'i ost home qui rien vousist,
Qui d'autre terre à li venist,
Qui le roi li donast tel don,
Qui enor fust à tel baron.
De bons homes, et de richesse,
Et de planté, et de largesse,
Et de corteise, et d'enor,
Portoist Bretaigne lors la flor,

[1] Probably trinkets. [2] Weasel fur. [3] Liveries?
[4] Clasps. [5] Barbed arrows.
[6] Lorains are *reins*; but I do not understand which of the accompaniments of hunting was called a *chasseur*.

Sor tous les regnes d'environ;
Et sor tous ceulx que nos savons.
Plus erent corteis et vaillanz,
N'eis li povres païsanz,
Que chevaliers en autre regnes:
Et autresi erent les fames.
Ja ne veissiez chevalier,
Qui de rien feist à epriser,
Que armes, et dras, et ator,
N'en eut tout d'une color.
D'une color armes feisoent,
D'une color se vestissoent.
Si erent les dames prisiez,
D'une color apareilléez.
Ja nul chevalier n'i eust,
De que quel parage il fust,
Ja peust avoir druerie,
Ne corteise dame à amiée,
Se il n'eust trois fois esté
De chevalerie prové
Li chevalers mielx en valoent,
Et en l'estor mieulx en fesoent;
Et les dames meillores estoent
Et plus chastement en vivoent.

Quand li roi leva del manger
Alez sunt tuit *esbanoier* [1]

[1] To amuse themselves.

De la cité es champs issirent:
A plusors gieux se despartirent.
Li uns alerent *botorder*, [1]
Et les *isneaux* [2] chevalx monstrer:
Li autres alerent escrimir,
Ou pierres getier, ou *saillir*. [3]
Tielx i avoit qui dars lancoent,
Et tielx i avoit qui lutoent,
Chascun del gieu s'entremestoit,
Qui entremetre se savoit.
Cil qui son compaignon vainqueit,
Et qui d'aucun gieu pris avoieit,
Etoit sempres mené au rei,
Et à tous les autres monstré.
Et li roi del sien li donost,
Tant donc cil liez s'en alost.
Les dames sor les murs aloent,
Por esgarder ceulx qui joient.
Qui ami avoit en la place,
Tout li tornost l'oil ou la face.
Trois jorz dura la feiste ainsi;
Quand vint au quart, au mercredi,
Li roi ses bacheliers *fien fa* [4]
Evors deliverez devisa, [5]
Lor servise a celx rendi,
Qui por terre l'orent servi:

[1] To just. [2] Fleet (*isnel.*) [3] To leap.
[4] Fiefs—gave fiefs. [5] I cannot explain this.

Bois dona, et chasteleriez,
Et evesquiez, et abbaiez.
A ceulx qui d'autres terres estoient,
Qui par amor au roi venoent,
Dona coupes, dona destriers,
Dona de ses avers plus chers. &c.

An account of this author's remaining works will be found in the note below.*

BENOIT was contemporary with Wace. M. de la Rue supposes him to be the Benoit de St. More, who wrote the *History of the Wars of Troy*, a

* Wace's second work is a History of the two Irruptions of the Normans into Neustria and England. Like the Brut, it is written in verses of eight syllables, with that facility which distinguishes Wace from all his contemporaries: it is compiled from the best chonicles, and evinces an extraordinary knowledge of general history. This work is only to be found in France, where there are two ancient copies, one in the Royal, and the other in the Colbertine Library; and a modern copy by M. Lancelot, with the variations added in the margin, is also in the Royal Library.

The third poem of Wace is the famous *Roman du Rou*, that is to say, of Raoul or Rollo, first Duke of Normandy. It was written, as Wace himself declares, in 1160, and is composed in Alexandrine verse of twelve syllables. It is annexed to the MSS. just mentioned, as are also his fourth work, which is the Life of William Long-sword, son of

French poem of about twenty thousand verses, imitated from the apocryphal Latin histories of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. This work is preserved among the MSS. Harl. No. 4482, and

Rollo; and the fifth, or Romance of Richard, son of William Long-sword; both in the same Alexandrine metre.

Wace's sixth work is a poem of considerable length, containing near twelve thousand verses, and gives the remaining history of the Dukes of Normandy, which it carries down to the sixth year of Henry I. It mentions the coronation of Henry the Second's eldest son, who was associated to the crown in the year 1170, soon after which the poem may be supposed to have been written. It is in eight-syllable metre, and was mistaken by Mr. Tyrwhitt for the Roman du Rou. A copy of it is in the British Museum, Bib. Reg. 4. C. xi.

The seventh work is a compendium of the History of the Dukes of Normandy, beginning with Henry II. and *ascending* to Rollo. It is in Alexandrine verse, and preserved in the Royal Library at Paris.

The eighth is a History of the Origin of the Feast of the CONCEPTION, which is supposed to have been established by William the Conqueror, and was kept in Normandy with such magnificence, that it was usually called in France, *the Feast of the Normans*. It is to be found in the Royal Library at Paris.

The ninth is a Life of St. Nicholas, written, like the preceding, in eight-syllable verse. It is to be found in the library of Trinity Coll. Cambridge, in the Bodleian, and a third MSS. is in the possession of Mr. Douce, F. A. S. Parts

is supposed by M. Galland to have been written very soon after Wace's Brut d'Angleterre. It was perhaps the success of this poem that induced Henry II. to confide to Benoit the task of writing, in French verse, the history of the dukes of Normandy: and this royal mandate exciting the emulation of Wace (by whom the circumstance is mentioned) induced that poet to complete his own series of compositions on the same subject, in the hope of proving the inferiority of his rival's talent. Benoit, however, persevered and accomplished his task to the intire satisfaction of the monarch. This work, containing about twenty-three thousand verses of eight syllables, is preserved in the British

of this poem are extracted by Hickes. Vide Thesaurus. p. 145, 149, &c.

The tenth is the *Roman du Chevalier au Lion.* Fauchet, and others, ascribe this to Chretian de Troyes, who (says M. de la Rue) perhaps converted it into *prose*, as he did the Romance of Perceval le Galois. It is to be observed, however, that Fauchet's quotations from the Romance of the Chevalier au Lion *are in verse.* (Vide Fauchet, p. 109.)

Lastly, it seems not improbable that Wace may have composed some parts of the Romance of Alexander; and Mr. Tyrwhitt suspects that he is the *Robert Guasco* who translated the Martyrdom of St. George. The number and excellence of Wace's compositions induced Henry II. to bestow on him a canonry in the Cathedral of Bayeux.

Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 1717. Though inferior to Wace in perspicuity and elegance, Benoit is much commended by M. de la Rue for the accuracy of his facts, and for the various and lively pictures of contemporary manners which he has preserved, and which are not to be found in any other author. In descriptive poetry he seems to have possessed considerable merit; and, supposing him the author of the Song on the advantages of the Crusade, which M. de la Rue, with great probability, ascribes to him, he is to be considered as the father of French lyric poetry, so that the high reputation he enjoyed appears to have been well deserved.

Guernes, an ecclesiastic of Pont St. Maxence, in Picardy, wrote a metrical life of Thomas a Becket; and, from his anxiety to procure the most authentic information on the subject, came over to Canterbury in 1172. He states, that having begun his work in France, he had been inaccurate in many of his facts, but that by conversing with persons who had known St. Thomas in private life, he had been enabled to correct many of his mistakes, and to make a considerable progress in his poem, when his secretary robbed him of his manuscript: that this principally afflicted him from the fear that his name might be employed to cover untruths, and that purchasers might be deluded into buying

an imperfect work: but that, far from being discouraged by this unlucky robbery, he had redoubled his zeal for collecting materials, and had finally perfected his work in 1177. He farther assures us, that he had more than once, publicly read his poem at the tomb of the Archbishop; a proof (says M. de la Rue) that the Romance tongue was, at this time, very generally understood in England: perhaps, however, there never was a period when the town of Canterbury would not have furnished a sufficient audience for such an exhibition. This work of Guernes is written in stanzas of five Alexandrines, all ending with the same rhyme; a mode of composition which may possibly have been adopted for the purpose of being easily chanted. It is in the British Mus. MSS. Harl. No. 270; and M. de la Rue suspects that the stolen copy exists in the MSS. Cotton. Domitian, A. xi.

Such is the short and meagre abstract of the information which M. de la Rue has communicated to the public, in his two very curious dissertations. He is since returned to France, after pledging himself to resume and continue the subject, and it certainly is to be wished that he may be enabled to accomplish a task for which he is so well qualified. But it is not sufficient that the mines of literature contained in our public libraries, should

be distinctly pointed out, unless some steps are taken to render them generally useful. All the information that can be obtained from the professed historians of the middle ages, has been collected by the successive labour of our antiquaries, whose activity, acuteness, and perseverance, do them the highest honour: and their ingenuity has often been successful in detecting, and extorting by comparative criticism, many particulars respecting the state of society, and the progress of arts and manners, the direct communication of which would have been considered by the monkish analists as degrading to the dignity of their narrative. But these details, which are neglected by the historian, form the principal materials of the poet. His business is minute and particular description; he must siese on every thing that passes before his eyes; and the dress, the customs, the occupations, the amusements, as well as the arts and learning of the day, are necessary, either to the embellishment or the illustration of his subject. A printed copy of the works of the Norman poets, or at least of a copious and well selected extract from them, would be a most valuable present to the public; and, indeed it is only in this shape that they can be very generally useful: because the difficulty of the old manuscript characters is a permanent tax on

the ingenuity of each successive student; it is in every case a delay to the gratification of his curiosity; and the talent of decyphering obsolete characters is not necessarily attached to the power of profiting by the information which is concealed under them. Besides, a scarce and valuable manuscript cannot possibly be put into general circulation; and many learned men are necessarily debarred, either by distance, or by infirmity, or by the pressure and variety of their occupations, from spending much time in those public repositories of learning, to which the access has indeed been rendered easy, but could not be made convenient, by the liberality of their founders.

CHAPTER III.

State of our Language and Poetry in the Reign of Henry II. and Richard I. exemplified by an Extract from Layamon's Translation of Wace.—Conjectures concerning the Period at which the Anglo-Norman, or English Language began to be formed.—Early Specimen of English Poetry, from Hickes's Thesaurus.

WHILE Norman literature was making a rapid progress in this country, under the fostering influence of royal patronage; and the Latin compositions of John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, and others, bore testimony to the no less powerful encouragement of the church; the Saxon language, however degraded, still continued to maintain its ground; was generally spoken, and even employed in works of information and amusement, for at least a century after the Norman conquest. This is incontestably proved, not only by the Saxon Chronicle, which, as it relates the death of King Stephen, must have been written after that

event, but by a much more curious composition, a poetical translation of Wace's Brut, written by one Layamon, "a priest of Ernleye upon Severn," (as he calls himself,) a copy of which is preserved in the British Museum, MSS. Cot. Calig. A. ix.

As this very curious work never was, and probably never will be printed, it appeared necessary to depart, in this instance, from the practice usually adopted in the present sketch, and to give the following extract in the spelling of the original MSS. This minute accuracy was requisite for the satisfaction of such readers as may choose to collate the transcript with the original, and for the purpose of enabling every reader to correct such mistakes as may have been committed in the glossarial notes. Perhaps, too, it may not be amiss to exhibit a single specimen of the strange orthography adopted in our early MSS. as a proof that the degree of obscurity attributed to this cause has not been over-rated.

Tha[1] the masse *wes*[2] *isungen,*
Of chircken heo thrungen.[3]
The king mid his folke
To his mete *verde,*[4]

[1] When. [2] Was, sung.
[3] *Out* of church they thronged, *kirk.*
[4] Went, *fared.*

And *mucle his dugethe:* [1]
Drem wes on hirede. [2]
Tha quene, *an other halve,* [3]
Hire *hereberwe isohte:* [4]
Heo [5] hafde of *wif-monne* [6]
Wunder ane moni en. [7]

Tha the king wes iseten
Mid his monnen to his mete,
To *than* [8] kinge com tha biscop,
Seind DUBRIZ, *the was swa god;* [9]
And *nom* [10] of his *hafde,* [11]
His *kinc-helm hæhne.* [12]

[1] Many of his nobility, Sax.

[2] Joy was in the household? *drem, dream,* Jubilatio. *Hirede,* Sax. a retinue, household, &c. nearly equivalent to the French word, *mesnie.*

[3] On the other *half,* side.

[4] Her lodging *(harbour)* sought.

[5] *She,* sometimes *they,* sometimes *you.*

[6] Women.

[7] Wonder a many one; *i. e.* she had wonderfully many women with her.

[8] The accusative case of *the,*—Sax.

[9] Saint Dubric, that was so good.

[10] Took, Shakspeare's *nim.*

[11] Off his head.

[12] His *high? royal?* king-helm, *i. e.* crown.

(For than mucle golde
The king hine beren n'alde [1])
And dude enne lasse crune
On thas kinges *hafde.* [2]
And *seoth-then* [3] he gon do
Athere quene *alswo.* [4]

Inne Troie this *wes laȝe* [5]
Bi heore ælderne daȝe [6]
Tha Bruttes of come. [7]
The weoren wel idone,
Alle tha wepmen,
At heore mete seten,
Sundi bi heom seolven. [8]
That heom thuhte *weldon.* [9]
And alswa tha wifmen
Heore *iwune* [10] hafden.

[1] The king him bear ne would, *i. e.* did not choose to carry so much gold on his head.

[2] And did (*i. e.* placed) a less crown on the king's head.

[3] Sith-then, afterwards.

[4] He did the same to the queen.

[5] Was the *law* or custom.

[6] From their elder days.

[7] When Britons came from thence?

[8] All the women that were *well done* (well educated) at their meat sate *asunder by themselves.*

[9] That they thought well done.

[10] Habitation. To *won*, Johnson.

Tha the king wes isete,
Mid alle his dugeth to his mete,
Eorles, and beornes,
At borde thas kinges;
The stiward com steppen,
The KAY wes ihaten;
Haxt cnīht on londe,
Under than kinge,
Of alle than *kepe*,[1]
Of Arthures hirede.
Kay *hehte* him bivoren,
Moni *heah mon iboren*.[2]
Ther weoren a thusen cnihte bald,
Wunder wel italde,
That theineden than kingen,
And *his here thringen*.[3]
Ælc cniht hafde *pal on*,[4]
And mid golde bigon;

[1] Heap, number,—*i. e.* when the king was seated with all his nobility at his meat, earls and barons at the king's table, the steward came stepping, that Kay was called, the highest knight in the land, under the king, of all the number of Arthur's *household*.

[2] Kay *summoned* before him many *high men born*, i. e. high born men.

[3] There were a thousand bold knights, wonder well numbered, that served the king, *and thronged as his servants*?

[4] Each knight had a pall on (*i. e.* a mantle), and bordered with gold.

And alle heore *vingeres*
I riven[1] mid gold ringes,
Thas *beorn tha sunde*,[2]
From *kuchene*[3] to than kinge.

An other half, was BEDUER,
Thas kinges *hæȝe birle*.[4]
Mid him weoren eorlene sunen,
Of *athele*[5] cunne iboren;
And there hehȝe cnihtene sunen,
Tha thider weoren *icunen*.[6]
Seoven kingene sunen,
That mid him *quehten*.[7]
BEDEUER *avormest eode*,[8]
Mid guldene bolle:
After him a thusend
Thrasten[9] to hirede.

[1] Their fingers *fastened* with gold rings.

[2] That bore sundry things? or what was sent?

[3] Kitchen. The word seems to have been pronounced *cookeene*.

[4] On another part was Bedwer, the king's *high-butler* (birlian, haurire, Sax.)

[5] Of noble kin born.

[6] Probably for *icumen*—that thither were come.

[7] Marched, *cweten*, Sax.

[8] Afotemost yode, went first, with a gold bowl.

[9] Thrust, or pressed forward to serve.

And *alle thas cunnes*[1] drenche,
Them cuthe on bithenche,
And the quene, an hire end,
Wifmen *swide hende*,[2]
A thusend hire eode bivoren;
Riche men and wel icoren,
To thainen there quene,
And than that mid hire weoren.

Nes he nævere iboren,[3]
Of nane cnihte icoren,
Ilæred, no læwed,
Anauere n'are leode,
Tha cuthe him itelle,
An æies cunnes spelle,

[1] All *kinds* of drink that they could think of? or they *can* drink all that they could think of?

[2] Very beautiful, handsome; the construction seems to be—"And the queen on her part [was with] very beau-"tiful women. A thousand men, rich and well chosen, "(*coren*, Sax.) went before, to serve the queen, and those "that were with her."

[3] "Ne was he never born of none chosen knight, learned "nor lewd (ignorant), nor any where was there a people "that could tell, in any kind of spell (language), of half "the rich-dom (riches) that was in Caerlion." The second verse seems to have been introduced solely for the sake of the rhyme.

Of halve than richedome,
The wes inne KAIRLIUNE.
Of seolvere and of golde,
And gode *iweden*[1]
Of hehȝe iborene monnen,
Tha inne *hirede wuneden*,[2]
Of horsen, and of *hafueken*,[3]
Of hunden to deoren,
And of riche jweden,
Tha athan hirede weoren.

And of alle than folke,[4]
The wuneden ther on folde,
Wes thisses londes folk,
Leodene hendest *itald.*
And alswa tha wimmen,
Wunliche on heowen;

[1] Good weeds, *i. e.* rich dresses.

[2] Of high born men that dwelt in the king's household. The word *hirede*, Sax. has three interpretations; a household—service—and a palace.

[3] Hawks, Sax. The next article is "deer-hounds."

[4] "And of all the folk that dwelt on fold (*i. e.* on earth) "was this land's folk the handsomest (or noble) people *told.* "And also the women, handsome (*winsome*, vanlich) of hue, "and highest shrowded (most richly dressed) and best in-"structed." (itoȝene, *peritus*, Sax.) *taughten*, Lat. docens.

And hahlukest iscrudde,
And alre best *itozene*.

For heo *hafdenon iquethen alle* [1]
By heore quike live
That heo wolden of ane heowen
Heore clathes hafben.
Sum hafde whit, sum hafden reed,
Sum hafde god grene æc,
And alches cunnes fah-clath:
Heom wes wunder anelath:
And elche untutle,
Heo talden unwurthe. [2]

[1] For they had declared (iquethen, Sax.) all, by their lives, (quike leve, living lives) that they would of one hue their [intire] dress have. Some had white, some had red, some had good green also, and each kind of variable cloth, *fah-clath*, Sax.) They were wonderfully uniform (*anelich*, Sax.) It seems, from this passage, that Layamon thought it indecent to wear the different parts of dress of different colours. Wace, indeed, seems to express the same opinion.

[2] The word *untutle* in this passage, and *tuhtle*, which occurs hereafter, may possibly be derived from tucht, tught, or tuckt, which, in several Gothic dialects, signifies *discipline*, *education*, and sometimes chastity, &c. See Ihre's Gloss. in voce *Tuckt*. The passage seems to mean, that the women were severe in their manners, and "told (*i. e.* held) as un-"worthy those who were irregular in their conduct or "dress."

Tha hafde *ænglene ard*[1]
That alrebezte here word.
And this leodisce volc æc,
Leofvest than kinge.
Tha wifmen *hehȝe iborene*,[2]
Tha wuneden athissen londe,
Hafden iquethen alle,
On heore quides sothe,
That man lauerd taken nolde,
Inne thissere leode,
Næver nænne cniht,
(Neore he noht swa wel idiht)
Bute he icostned weoren
Thrie inne compe.
And his *oht scipen icudde*;[3]
And *ifonded*[4] hine seolve.

[1] If this mean *English earth*, it is certainly a violent anachronism; and yet it seems to mean, "Then had the Eng-"lish earth all that was best worth, and the very commonest "people (leodisce volc) also thought themselves of more "value than kings."

[2] "The women high-born, that dwelt in this land, had "declared all, on their word's truth, that [any] man for "their lord take they ne would among this people, never "none knight (ne were he nought so well idight) but "*(unless)* he proved *(icostned)* were thrice in camp.

[3] And his fear escape could.

[4] And had tried himself.

Baldeliche he mitte thenne ȝu,
Nen him *brude*.[1]
For ther ilke tuhtle
Cnihtes weoren *ohte*;[2]
Tha wifmen wel idone,
And tha better *biwitene*.[3]
Tha *weoren i brutene*
Blissen inoȝe.[4]

Tha the king *iȝeten*[5] hafde
And al his *mon-weorede*[6]
Tha *buȝan*[7] out of burhȝe
Theines swithen balde.
Alle tha kinges,
And heore *here-thringes*,[8]
Alle tha biscopes,
And alle tha clarckes,

[1] Boldly he might then go, none him *upbraided*?

[2] For there all the knights were disciplined by the fear of disgrace? (*ohte*, Sax. timor.)

[3] The women acted well, and were more prudent.

[4] Then were the Britons blessed enough?

[5] Eaten.

[6] Multitude of attendants, Sax.

[7] Fled. — Then fled out of the town the people very quickly.

[8] Their throngs of servants.

Alle the eorles,
And alle tha beornes,
Alle tha theines,
Alle the sweines,
Feire iscrudde[1]
Helde ȝeond felde.[2]
Summe heo *gunnen*[3] *æruen*[4]
Summe heo gunnen *urnen*[5]
Summe heo gunnen lepen,
Summe heo gunnen *sceoten*;[6]
Summe heo wræstleden,
And *wither-gome makeden*[7]
Summe heo *on velde*
Pleouweden under scelde.[8]
Summe heo driven balles,
Wide ȝeond the feldes.

[1] Fairly dressed.

[2] Held [their way] over the fields; or, perhaps, *covered* the fields (*helan*, Sax.) ȝeond is *beyond*.

[3] Began.

[4] To discharge arrows.

[5] To run.

[6] To shoot or throw darts.

[7] Made, or played at, wither-games, Sax.: *games of emulation*, *i. e.* justed.

[8] Some they on field played under shield; *i. e.* fought with swords.

Moni ane kunnes gomen
Ther heo gunnen *drinen*.[1]
And wha swa mihte iwenne
Wurthscipe of his *gomene*,[2]
Hine me[3] ladde mide songe
At foren than leod kinge;
And the king, for his gomene,
Ȝaf him ȝeven[4] gode.
Alle tha *quene*,[5]
The icumen weoren there,
And alle tha lafdies,
Leoneden ȝeond walles,
To bihalden tha duȝe then,
And that folc plæie.
This *ilæste threo dæȝes*,[6]
Swulc gomes and swulc plæȝes,
Tha, athan veorthe dæie

[1] Many a kind of game there they gan urge. *Dringen*, (Dutch) is to urge, press, or drive.

[2] And whoso might win worship by his gaming.

[3] Him they led with song before the people's king. *Me*, a word synonymous with the French *on*, introduced, perhaps, by the Danes or Normans.

[4] Gave him givings, gifts.

[5] All the queens who were come to the festival, and all the ladies, leaned over the walls to behold the nobles there, and that folk play.

[6] This lasted three days, such games and such plays.

The king gon to *spekene*[1]
And ȝaf his gode cnihten
All *heorere rihten*;[2]
He ȝef seolver, he ȝæf gold,
He ȝef hors, he ȝef lond,
Castles, and clæthes eke;
His monnen he *iquende*.[3]

The reader is certainly aware that a large proportion of the French words which have found their way into our language, were introduced through the medium of translations from Norman literature; and it is evident that such terms are particularly to be expected in descriptions of dress, of feasts, and of amusements; it is therefore presumed that the foregoing extract, both on account of its subject and its length, may be received as a tolerably fair specimen of Layamon's phraseology. And as it does not contain any word which we are under the necessity of referring to a French origin, we cannot but consider it as simple and unmixed, though very barbarous Saxon. At the same time, the orthography of this MS. in which we see, for the first time, the admission of the soft *g* together

[1] Then, on the fourth day, the king went to *council?*
[2] And gave his good knights all their rights or rewards.
[3] He satisfied.

with the Saxon ȝ, as well as some other peculiarities, seem to prove that the pronunciation of our language had already undergone a considerable change. Indeed the whole style of this composition, which is broken into a series of short, unconnected sentences, and in which the construction is as plain and artless as possible, and perfectly free from inversions, seems to indicate that little more than the substitution of a few French for the present Saxon words, was now necessary, to produce an exact resemblance with that Anglo-Norman, or English, of which we possess a few specimens, supposed to have been written in the early part of the thirteenth century.

Layamon's versification also, is no less remarkable than his language. Sometimes he seems anxious to imitate the rhymes, and to adopt the regular number of syllables which he had observed in his original; at other times he disregards both; either because he did not consider the laws of metre, or the consonance of final sounds as essential to the gratification of his readers, or because he was unable to adopt them, throughout so long a work, from the want of models in his native language on which to form his style. The latter is, perhaps, the most probable supposition; but at all events, it is apparent that the recurrence of his rhymes is

much too frequent to be the result of chance; so that upon the whole it seems reasonable to infer, that Layamon's work was composed at, or very near the period, when the Saxons and Normans in this country began to unite into one nation, and to adopt a common language. As this is a most curious epocha in our literary as well as political history, it is worth while to inquire how far it is capable of being ascertained; if not with precision, at least within some definite limits.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's history was written in or about 1125; and we know from Wace's concluding words, that his translation was not finished till 1155. This appears, at first sight, to be rather a long interval; because a work containing the whole early history of Britain, supposed to be compiled from authentic materials, written in Latin, and consequently addressed to all the learned men of the age, could not fail to excite very general curiosity. But before the invention of printing, when books could only be multiplied by transcription, it must be expected that a considerable time would elapse, before a long work would become so popular as to require a translation, or fall in the way of those, who had leisure and ability for such a task. If we assume a similar period of thirty years for the completion of Layamon's version, we shall

fix it at 1185; and this is perhaps the earliest date that can be assigned to it, because Wace's Brut was longer than Geoffrey's history, and was likely to be less rapidly diffused among the learned; besides which, being written in rhyme, its imitation was accompanied with greater difficulty.

It is apparently impossible to establish, with any degree of certainty, a chronological series of those English poems which we still possess in manuscript, or to determine the year in which that series ought to commence; but if any conclusion can be drawn from internal evidence, arising from a comparison of the many pieces ascribed to the middle of the thirteenth century, it may be presumed, from the facility of rhyming evinced in many of them, and even in the very dull history of Robert of Gloucester, which contains more than thirteen thousand rhymes, that much poetry had been written before this period, and some probably as early as the accession of Henry III. in 1216. Perhaps, therefore, we may fairly infer, that the Saxon language and literature began to be mixed with the Norman about 1185; and that in 1216 the change may be considered as complete.

If, instead of assuming these data for our conjecture, we should choose to establish it on such documents as can be easily drawn from our political

history, we shall arrive at nearly the same conclusion. This will appear from the following considerations.

It must be remembered, that for many years after the Conquest, the English could not be brought to a quiet acquiescence in William's usurpation; that the number of his troops bore a very small proportion to the whole population of the island; and consequently that they could not have been safely scattered over the country, but were, of necessity, collected into garrisons, so as to form at all times the elements of an army, which it was the object of the feudal system to connect and perpetuate. There were therefore two classes of persons, whose respective languages could not be immediately affected by the Conquest; these were the Norman nobles, and the Saxon peasants. The first, immured in fortified castles with their families, anxiously preserving their original connection with France, where many of them possessed estates; associating only with their own countrymen at the state festivals, when they repaired to the court of their sovereign; and too haughty to converse with their vassals, retained the exclusive use of the French language to a much later period than that with which we are at present occupied. The second, or *uplandish* men, as they are frequently called,

officer, were exposed to every exaction of partial and capricious tyranny. Anderson, in his History of Commerce, gives us a curious instance of the general poverty resulting from this system. "In "the letter (says he) from Richard I. to his queen, "dated from Haguenau, A. D. 1193, urging the "levy of his ransome, by borrowing all the money "that could be procured from the church, and "from the barons, *no mention is made of the money* "*of merchants or citizens, which shews the poor state* "*of England at this time, in point of money and* "*commerce.*" He had, however, previously noticed a most material and beneficial change which took place a few years before, in the political situation of the citizens and burghers; a change, indeed, so important, that Madox, in his History of the Exchequer, (chap. x.) considers it as the adoption of an entirely new system, and as the foundation of all their future prosperity. This was the grant of various immunities by charter, and the formation of corporate bodies in certain towns and cities; the earliest of which is assigned to the 26th year of Henry II. A. D. 1180, when such charters were granted to the city of London, and the town of Southampton.

The object of Henry's policy in this measure was, by encouraging the growth of the towns, to

erect a barrier against the encroachments of the aristocracy; and this policy, in which he persevered during the remainder of his reign, was also adopted by his sons. Several proofs of it are recorded by Anderson, even in the short and busy reign of Richard I. and they are much more numerous in that of his successor. "Notwithstanding all the "faults too justly charged on King John, (says this "historian) we find him, in the first year of his "reign (A. D. 1199), beginning the good purpose "as a king, which he afterwards pursued through "his whole reign, of erecting his demesne towns "into *free burghs;* which thereby paved the way "for the introduction of commerce into this king-"dom." The barons, on the other hand, with no less policy, declared themselves the champions of all the privileges obtained or claimed by the cities, who thus derived a double advantage from the contest for popularity between the king and the aristocracy.

It is not our present business to pursue the gradual effects of these measures in disseminating liberty and prosperity, but it seems probable that their operation on our language must have been immediate and extensive. The Norman and Saxon inhabitants of England were now permanently united by the bonds of common interest; and the

establishment of a popular form of municipal government, under an annually elective magistracy, by encouraging the spirit and furnishing the topics of daily discussion, could not fail of giving currency to new forms of speech, and of forming a language adopted to their new situation.

It is evident that nothing less than the most minute enquiry into all the circumstances of our history under the first Norman kings, would be sufficient for the full investigation of this subject; but the preceding observations will perhaps authorize us to assume, that the formation of the English language took its rise, and was probably far advanced, during the interval of about thirty years which preceded the accession of Henry III.

After quitting Layamon, we shall waste little time on the compositions of his immediate successors. The earliest of these, according to Mr. Tyrwhitt, is a paraphrase of the Gospel histories, called *Ormulum*, composed by one Orme or Ormin, which seems to have been considered as mere prose by Hickes and Wanley, who have given extracts from it, but is really written in verse of fifteen syllables, without rhyme, in imitation of the most common form of the Latin tetrameter iambick. The next is a moral poem on old age, written in rhyme, and extracted by Hickes, part of which is to be found in the

[illegible] Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. Another [illegible] from Hickes's extract, by [illegible] St. Margaret, which, as [illegible] part of a voluminous [illegible] containing various [illegible] perhaps, from some [illegible].

[illegible] curious specimen [illegible] is one which that [illegible] as a most malevo- [illegible] It, however, by [illegible] amelioration, be- [illegible] most opprobrious [illegible] improved, as a [illegible] The author, [illegible] of a popular ro- [illegible] of an imaginary [illegible] quarter of [illegible] the Land of Cockaine; in [illegible] happy com- [illegible] and his object is [illegible] ease and luxury enjoyed in [illegible] less effect in peopling [illegible] improvements more [illegible] by the prosecutes of real and devo- [illegible] MSS. there is an ancient [illegible] quoted by Mr. Warton, on a nearly

similar plan, called "Le Ordre de bel Eyse." The same idea is also pursued by Rabelais, and seems to have been a great favourite with the early French satirists. The word *cokaine* seems to be Frenchified Latin; and our poem bears the strongest mark of being a translation; because the elegance of the sketch, and the refined irony of the general composition, are strongly contrasted with the rudeness of the language. As the poem is not excessively long, it is here printed entire, with such notes as appeared necessary to render it tolerably intelligible. There are, however, some passages, corrupted perhaps by the negligence of transcribers, the obscurity of which I have not been able to remove.

Far in the sea, by West Spain,
Is a land *ihote*[1] *Cokaigne*,[2]

[1] Called. (Saxon.)

[2] From *coquina*; whence *cucina*, *cuisine*, &c. and the old English word *cockney*. In P. Ploughman's Vision, p. 35, (quoted hereafter) P. P. says,

——————— I have no salt bacon,
Ne no *cokeney*, by Christ! *collops for to make*.

Perhaps the intelligence which the inhabitants of the metropolis displayed in the culinary art, may have procured them the appellation of *cockneys* from the *uplandish* or *country-men*.

There n'is land under *heaven-reich*,[1]
Of *wel*[2] of goodness it y-like.
Though Paradise be merry and bright,
Cokayn is of fairer sight.
What is there in Paradise
But grass, and flower, and green-*rise*?[3]
Though there be joy and great *dute*,[4]
There n'is meat but fruit.
There n'is hall, *bure*[5], no[6] bench;
But water, man-is thirst to quench.
Beth[7] there no men but two;
Hely[8] and Enoch also.
Clinglich[9] may *hi*[10] go
Where there *wonith*[11] men no mo.[12]

[1] Heaven, the kingdom of heaven. Sax.
[2] Wealth, abundance of goodness. Sax.
[3] Branches. Sax.
[4] Pleasure, *deduit*. Old Fr.
[5] Bower, (Sax.) synonimous with chamber. F.
[6] *No*, and sometimes *nether*, are used for *nor*.
[7] There are. [8] Elias.
[9] The sense seems to be, "It is easy for them to be *clean* "and of pure heart, because they are only two, and cannot "be corrupted by bad example."—Why Paradise should contain only two inhabitants is not very intelligible, but, it was thus represented in the pageants, as appears from a passage in the Fabian, quoted by Strutt, (View of Manners, &c. Vol. II. p. 53.) "In the border of this delicious place,

In Cokayn is meat and drink,
Without care, *how*[1] and *swink*[2]
The meat is *trie*,[3] the drink so clear,
To noon, *rusin*,[4] and supper
I *sigge*[5] *(for soth boot were*[6]*)*
There n'is land on earth *is*[7] peer.
Under heaven n'is land I *wiss*[8]
Of so *muckle*[9] joy and bliss.

There is many a sweet sight:
All is day, n'is there no night;

"*which was named Paradise*, mode *two* forgrowen faders, "resemblynge *Enoch, and Hely*, the which had thys sayenge "to the kynge," &c.

[10] They. The words *they* and *them*, instead of *hi* and *hem*, seem to have been introduced, as Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, about the time of Chaucer.

[11] Dwell.

[1] Anxiety. Sax.

[2] Labour. Sax.

[3] Choice, *trie*. Fr.

[4] *Rushing* is still used, in the northern counties, for what the French call a *gouter*, or meal between dinner and supper. Vide Grose's Prov. Glossary. Noon was the usual time of dinner.

[5] I say, or affirm.

[6] This kind of phrase is now obsolete; and yet we might say "for falsehood boot-less were."

[7] Apparently for *his*, instead of *its*.

[8] I know.

[9] Much.

[10] More.

There n'is *barat*[1] nother strife,
N'is there no death, *ac*[2] ever life.
There n'is lack of meat, no cloth,
There n'is man no woman wrath;
There n'is serpent, wolf, no fox;
Horse, no *capyl*,[3] cow, no ox:
There n'is sheep, no swine, no goat,
No none *hornyla*,[4] God it wot.
Nother *harate*,[5] nother stud:
The land is full of other good.
N'is there fly, flea, no louse,
In cloth, in town, bed, no house.
There n'is *dunner*,[6] sleet, no hail,
No none vile worm, no snail:
No none storm, rain, no wind:
There n'is man no woman blind:
Ok[7] all is game, joy, and glee.
Well is him that there may be!

There beth rivers, great and fine,
Of oil, milk, honey, and wine.

[1] Wrangling. [2] But.

[3] Steed, from *caballus*. It is used by Chaucer, &c.

[4] Probably a *groom*, as *harate* and *stud* are mentioned immediately afterwards: the Saxon word is *hors-weall*.

[5] *Haras*. Fr. A place where horses are bred.

[6] Thunder. Sax. [7] But.

Water serveth there to no thing
But to *siyt*[1] and to washing.
There is[2] manner fruit;
All is solace and *dedute.*

There is a well-fair abbéy,
Of white monkés, and of grey,
There beth bowers, and halls:
All of pasties beth the walls,
Of flesh, of fish, and a rich meat,
The likefullest that man may eat.
Flouren-cakes beth the *shingles*[3] all
Of church, cloister, bowers, and hall.
The *pinnes*[4] beth fat puddings
Rich meat to princes and kings.

[1] To seeth, or boil.

[2] Here the word *many* is, perhaps, omitted.

[3] Wooden tiles, for which those of clay were afterwards substituted. Those ships in which the edges of the planks cover each other like tiles, and which we now, with less apparent reason, call *clinker-built* vessels, were formerly called *shingled ships.* "That in thy *shingled* ship shall be "saved." P. Ploughman, p. 44.

[4] Pinnacles. Mr. Gray, in one of his letters to Mr. Mason, seems to say that these ornaments were not introduced into our Gothic architecture before the reign of Henry III. (Vide quarto Edit. p. 296.)

Man may there of it enow,
All with *riyt*,[1] and nought with *wow*.[2]
All is common, to young and old,
To stout and stern, meek and bold.

There is a cloister fair and light,
Broad and long of seemly sight.
The pillars of that cloister, all
Beth y-turned of chrystál;
With *harlas*,[3] and capital
Of green jaspe, and red corál.
In the *praer*[4] is a tree,
Swithe[5] lekeful for to see.
The root is ginger, and *galingale*;[6]
The scions beth all, *sedwale*.[7]

[1]—[2] The meaning seems to be, that meat was not *weighed* out, but in *abundance*, and at the disposal of all who chose to seize it.

[3] Probably the *plinth*, in Italian *orlo*. In Cotgrave's Dict. we have *orle*, for a hem or border; hence the word *ourler*.

[4] Meadow. *Prairie*. Fr. [5] Very.

[6] The sweet cyprus, a sort of rush, the roots of which were supposed to be an excellent stomachic. It was probably like the real galanga, one of the ingredients in the hypocras, or medicated wine, used at the conclusion of their meals.

[7] Valerian; or perhaps the mountain spikenard; for Parkinson calls them both by the name of *setwall*.

Trie[1] maces beth the flower,
The rind, *canell*[2] of sweet odoúr;
The fruit *gilofre*[3] of good smack.
Of *cucubés*[4] there n'is no lack,
There beth roses of red blee,
And lily, likeful for to see:
They *walloweth*[5] neither day nor night;
This ought be a sweet sight.
There beth four *wells*[6] in the abbéy
Of *treacle*,[7] and *halwei*,[8]
Of *baum*,[9] and eke *pirnent*,[10]
Ever *ernend*[11] *to right rent*;[12]

[1] Choice. Fr.

[2] Cinnamon. Fr.

[3] Cloves. Fr. They were first introduced into the West in 1190. Anderson's Hist. of Commerce.

[4] Probably cuckoo-flowers, or lady-smocks.

[5] They *fade*; grow yellow. The *w* seems to have often had the sound of *v* or *f*: and our word *fallow* had originally the same meaning.

[6] Springs.

[7] Any sovereign remedy was at this time called *treacle*; *Venice-treacle* is still in some repute. The sirop of the sugar-bakers, now called treacle, cannot have been known so early.

[8] Holy-water?

[9] Balsam. Fr.

[10] Spiced-wine. Fr.

[11] Running. Sax.

[12] In a full stream.

Of they streams all the mould,
Stones precious, and gold.
There is saphire, and *unione*,[1]
Carbuncle, and *astione*,[2]
Smaragde,[3] *lugre*,[4] and *prassione*,[5]
Beryl, onyx, topasione,
Amethyst, and chrysolite,
Chalcedon, and *epetite*.[6]

There beth birds, many and *fale*,[7]
Throstle, thrush, and nightingale,
Chalandre,[8] and *wood-wale*,[9]
And other birds, without tale;
That stinteth never by their might,
Merry to sing, day and night.
[*Here a few lines are lost.*]
Yet I do you mo to wit,
The geese y-roasted on the spit,

1 2 3 4 5 6 Of these names three only are intelligible; the *unio*, or pearl; the *smaragde*, or emerald; and the *prassione* (prasius), a stone generally found in the emerald mines. *Astione* may perhaps be the astrios or astroites of Pliny; *Lugre*, the leucho-chrysus, or chrysolite; and *epetite* the *hæmatites*, or blood stone. The virtues formerly assigned to gems will account for the length of this list.

7 Numerous. Sax.

8 Gold-finch.

9 Wood-lark?

Flee to that abbey, God it wot,
And *gredith*[1] "Geese all hot! all hot!"
Hi bringeth *galek*,[2] great plentee,
The best *y-dight*[3] that man may see.
The *leverokes*[4] that beth *couth*,[5]
Lieth adown to man-is mouth;
Y-dight in stew full *swithe*[6] well,
Powder'd with *gingelofre* and *canell*.[7]

N'is-no speech of no drink:
All take enough without *swink*.[8]
Where the monks *geeth*[9] to mass,
All the *fenestres*,[10] that beth of glass,
Turneth into chrystal bright,
To give monks more light.
When the masses beth *isend*[11]
And the books *up-ilend*,[12]
The chrystal turneth into glass
In state that it rather was.

The young monks each day
After meat goeth to play;

[1] Cry. Sax. [2] Singing-birds? [3] Dressed.
[4] Larks. [5] Taught. [6] Quickly.
[7] Ginger and cinnamon. [8] Labour. [9] Go.
[10] Windows. [11] Ended. [12] Laid up.

N'is there hawk, no fowl so swift,
Better fleeing by the lift,
Than the monkis, high of mood,
With their sleeves and their hood.
When the abbot seeth them flee,
That he holds for much glee.
Ac natheless, all there among,
He biddeth them 'light to eve-song.
The monkis 'lighteth not adown,
As far fleeth *into randan*;[1]
When the abbot them y-seeeth,
That his monkis from him fleeeth,
He taketh maiden of the route,
And turneth up her white *toute*;[2]
And beateth the tabor with his hand,
To make his monkis 'light to land.
When his monkis that y-seeeth,
To the maid down they fleeeth;
And goeth the wench all about,
And thwacketh all her white toute.

[1] At random.

[2] There is much pleasantry in this picture of the young monks taking wing, by means of their sleeves and hoods, and flying like so many cupids: and our ancestors were probably not offended by the direct mention of the drum by which the reverend abbot called them back to their devotions.

And sith, after their swink,
Wendeth meekly home to drink:
And goeth to their collation
A well-fair procession.

Another abbey is thereby,
Forsooth a great fair nunnery:
Up a river of sweet milk,
Where is plenty great of silk.
When the summer's day is hot,
The young nuns take a boat,
And doth them forth in that rivér,
Both with oarés and with steer.
When they beth far from the abbéy,
They maketh them naked for to play,
And lieth down into the brim,
And doth them slily for to swim.
The young monks that *hi*[1] seeeth,
They doth them up, and forth they fleeeth,
And cometh to the nuns anon.
And each monk him taketh one,
And *snellich*[2] beareth forth their prey,
To the muckle grey abbéy.
And teacheth the monks an orison
With *jambleus*[3] up and down.

[1] Them. [2] Swiftly.
[3] Gambols.

The monk that wol be *staluu*[1] good,
And can set aright his hood,
He shall have, without dangér,
Twelve wives each year:
All through right, and nought through grace,
For to do himself soláce.
And thilk monk that *clepith*[2] best,
And doth his *likam*[3] all to rest,
Of him is hope, God it wot,
To be some father abbót.

Whoso will come that land to,
Full great penance he mot do.
Seven years in swine's *dritte*[4]
He mot wade, *wol ye y-witte*,[5]
All anon up to the chin,
So shall he the land win.

Lordings, good and *hend*,[6]
Mot ye never off world wend,
'Fore ye stand to your chance,
And fulfill that penánce;

[1] Stout.
[2] Is declared; or perhaps *clippeth*, i. e. embraceth.
[3] He who forces all his *likes*, or fellows, to take rest.
[4] Dirt. [5] You must know.
[6] Civil.

That he mot that land y-see,
And never more turn *ayé*.[1]

Pray we God so mot it be!
Amen, per sainte charité.

A great many of our poets in the sixteenth century allude to this story of *Cokain*, but they change its name without much improving it: they call it *Lubber-land*. In France and Italy the original expression is become proverbial. In the second volume of Mr. Way's translations from Le Grand's abridgment of the ancient French Fabliaux, is a poem on the "Pays de Cocaigne;" but not at all resembling the work which we have been examining. This was, perhaps, imported by the Crusaders, and bears some resemblance to the story told by Sir J. Mandeville, of the Chief of the Assassins, or *Old Man of the Mountain*, as he is usually called. His name, says our traveller, was *Gatholonabes;* a man "full of cauteles (*cunning*) "and sotylle disceytes," who had a castle on a mountain, strongly walled round; and within this "a garden, the fairest that any man might behold," with trees bearing all manner of fruits, "and all "manner of virtuous herbs of good smell, and all

[1] Again.

other herbs that bear fair flowers." And many
" fair wells." And, " beside those wells, he had
" let make fair halls and fair chambers, depainted
" with gold and azure." And he had all kinds of
beasts; and birds " that sang full delectably, and
" moved by craft, that it seemed they were quick."
And " the fairest damsels that might be found
" under the age of 15 years; and the fairest
" young striplings." " And he had also let make
" three wells, fair and noble, and all environed
" with stone of jasper, and of chrystal, diapred
" with gold, and set with precious stones, and
" great orient pearls. And he had made a conduit
" under earth, so that the three wells, at his list,
" one should run milk, another wine, and another
" honey. And that place he called Paradise."
(Sir J. Maundeville, fol. 336. Edit. 1727.)

CHAPTER IV.

Robert of Gloucester.—Various small Poems apparently written during the latter Part of the thirteenth Century.— Robert de Brunne.

We are now arrived at the poet whom his editor, Mr. Hearne, emphatically calls "the British Ennius," but concerning whom we know little more, than that he was a monk of the abbey of Gloucester; that his christian name was Robert; that he lived during the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I.; and that he wrote, in English rhymes, an history of England from the days of the imaginary Brutus, to his own time. His work seems to have been completed about the year 1280. "This "rhyming chronicle," says Mr. Warton, is totally "void of art or imagination. The author has "clothed the fables of Geoffrey of Monmouth in "rhyme, which have often a more poetical air "in Geoffrey's prose. The language is full of "Saxonisms; but this obscurity is perhaps owing "to the western dialect, in which our monk of "Gloucester was educated."

It would be quite hopeless to attempt a defence of Robert of Gloucester's poetry: perhaps his own wish was merely to render more generally intelligible a body of history which he considered as curious, and certainly believed to be authentic, because it was written in Latin, the language of truth and religion. Addressing himself to his illiterate countrymen, he employed the vulgar language as he found it, without any attempt at embellishment or refinement; and perhaps wrote in rhyme, only because it was found to be an useful help to the memory, and gave his work a chance of being recited in companies, where it could not be read. The latter part of his poem, in which he relates the events of his own time, will not appear quite uninteresting to those, who prefer the simple and desultory narratives of contemporary writers, to the philosophical abridgments of the moderns; and a great part of his obscurity will be found to result from that unnecessary mixture of the German or black letter with the Saxon characters, in which Mr. Hearne, from his inordinate appetite for antiquity, has thought proper to dress this ancient English author.

Robert of Gloucester, though cold and prosaic, is not quite deficient in the valuable talent of arresting the attention; and the orations with

which he occasionally diversifies the thread of his story, are in general appropriate and dramatic, and not only prove his good sense, but exhibit no unfavourable specimens of his eloquence. In his description of the first crusade he seems to change his usual character, and becomes not only entertaining, but even animated; and the vision, in which a "holy man" is ordered to reproach the Christians with their departure from their duty, and at the same time to promise them the divine intervention, to extricate them from a situation in which the exertions of human valour were apparently fruitless, would not, perhaps, to contemporary readers, appear less poetical, nor less sublime and impressive, than the introduction of the heathen mythology into the works of the early classics. The expectations awakened by this grand incident are, indeed, miserably disappointed by the strange morality which our monk ascribes to the Supreme Being, who declares himself offended, not by the unnecessary cruelties of the crusaders, nor by the general profligacy of their manners, so much as by the reflection, that they

"With women of *Paynim* did their foul kind,
"Whereof the stench came into heaven on high."

But these absurdities and inconsistencies present,

perhaps, a more lively picture of the reigning manners and opinions, than could have been intentionally delineated by a writer of much superior abilities to Robert of Gloucester.

Our sententious annalist has given, in the following few lines, the same description which we have already examined, as exhibited more at length by Wace, and imitated by Layamon.

The king was to his palace, *tho*[1] the service was y-do,
Y-lad with his *menye*,[2] and the queen to hers also.
For *hii*[3] held the old usages, that men with men were.
By them selve, and women by them selve also there.
Tho hii were each one y-set, as it to *her* state become,
Kay, king of Anjou, a thousand knights *nome*[4]
Of noble men, y-clothed in ermine each one,
Of one suit[5] and served at this noble feast anon.
Bedwer the butler, king of Normandy,
Nom also, *in his half*[6] a fair company,

[1] *When*, sometimes *then*, but never *though*, which our old authors sometimes spell *they*, sometimes *thogh*, &c. &c.

[2] Fr. Attendants.

[3] They.

[4] Took. Sax.

[5] In the same dress.

[6] *On* his behalf, or *on his part*. The use of the several

Of one suit, for to serve *of* the butlery.
Before the queen it was also of all such courtesy.
For to tell all the *nobley* [1] that there was y-do,
Though my tongue were of steel, me should nought *dure* [2] thereto.
Women *ne kept of* [3] no knight as *in druery*,[4]
But [5] he were in arms well y-proved, and at least *thrye*. [6]
That made, lo, the women the chaster life lead,
And the knights the *stalworder*, [7] and better in *her* deed.
Soon after this noble *meat*, [8] as right was *of* such tide,
The knights *atyled* [9] them about, *in* each side,
In fields and in meads to prove their *bachelry*: [10]
Some with lance, some with sword, without *villany*: [11]

prepositions was not fixed as it now is, but many of them were used indifferently. Many proofs of this occur in the present extract, and they are therefore marked in italics.

[1] Noble feats. Old Fr.
[2] Endure, last.
[3] Took no account of.
[4] Gallantry.
[5] Unless,
[6] Thrice.
[7] Bolder. Sax.
[8] Feast.
[9] Prepared, or perhaps armed. It seems to be the French word *atteller*; and the English word *harness* was also synonymous with armour.
[10] Knighthood. Fr.
[11] Meanness. Fr.

With playing at tables, *other* [1] at *chekere*,[2]
With *casting*, *other with setting*, *other* [3] in some *ogyrt* [4] manere.
And which-so of any game had the mastery,
The king *hem* of his gifts did large courtesy.
Up the *alures* [5] of the castles the ladies then stood,
And beheld this noble game, and which knights were good.
All the three *heat* [6] days y-laste this nobleye,
In halls and in fields, of meat, and eke of play.
These men came the fourth day before the king there,
And he gave them large gifts, ever as *hii* worth were.
Bishopricks and churches clerks he gave some,
And castles and towns, knights that were y-come.*

(Vol I. p. 191.)

[1] Or. [2] Chess. Chekere is properly a chess-board.

[3] This may possibly refer to tric-trac, or back-gammon; but casting and setting may also relate to throwing the bar.

[4] Other.

[5] The walks on the roof of the castle.

[6] Highest, or feast-days.

* For the purpose of shewing how exactly Robert of Gloucester translates from his original, I shall here add the whole corresponding passage from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Rex et regina—ille ad suum palatium cum viris, hæc ad aliud cum mulieribus, epulatum incedunt: antiquam nam-

The reader who compares the foregoing extract with the satirical piece contained in the last chapter, will probably think that Robert of Gloucester's

que consuetudinem Trojæ servantes Britones, consueverant mares cum maribus, mulieres cum mulieribus, festivos dies separatim agere.

Collocatis postmodum cunctis ut singulorum dignitas expetebat, Caius dapifer, hermenio ornatus, mille vero nobilissimis juvenibus comitatus est, qui omnes, hermino induti, fercula cum ipso ministrabant. Ex aliâ parte vero Bedverum pincernam, totidem vario amicti sequuntur, qui in scyphis diversorum generum multimoda pocula cum ipso distribuebant. In palatio quoque reginæ, innumerabiles ministri, diversis ornamentis induti, obsequium suum præstabant, morem suum exercentes; quem si omnino describere pergerem, nimiam historiæ prolixitatem generarem. Facetæ autem mulieres, consimilia indumenta habentes, nullius amorem habere dignabantur, nisi tertio in militiâ approbatus esset. Efficiebantur ergo castæ mulieres, et milites amore illarum meliores. Refectæ tandem epulis, diversi diversos ludos compositûri, campos extra civitatem adeunt. Mox milites, simulacrum prælii ciendo, equestrem ludum componunt: mulieres, in edito murorum aspicientes in curiales, amoris flammas more joci irritant. Alii telis, alii hastâ, alii ponderosorum lapidum jactû, alii saxis, alii aleis, cæterorumque jocorum diversitate contendentes, quod diei restabat, postpositâ lite prætereunt. Quicumque vero ludi sui victoriam adeptus erat, ab Arthuro largis muneribus ditabatur. Consumptis ergo primis in hunc modum diebus tribus, instante quarto vocantur cuncti qui ipsi propter

of Edward I. and was reputed (though it seems falsely) to be the author of some metrical prophecies not yet forgotten in Scotland. His contemporary Kendal is only known by the accidental mention of Robert de Brunne. There is, however, an unclaimed metrical Romance apparently belonging to this period, which the generosity of future critics may possibly assign to him. This is the Gest of King Horn, which is preserved in a very curious miscellany in the British Museum, (Harl. MSS. No. 2253) and mentioned by Chaucer as one of the *romances of price*. Mr. Warton has given an excellent abridgment of it, together with a considerable extract, in the first volume of his Poetry, p. 39.*

In the same manuscript which contains this romance, are found some political satires of considerable merit; one of which was certainly com-

* Having procured from the Museum a transcript of this very curious work, I should not have failed to insert it entire, but that I had reason to hope that the task of editing it will fall into much better hands. The reader will certainly learn with pleasure that Mr. Ritson has it in contemplation to publish a series of our old metrical romances, many of which exist only in manuscript. Such a work executed by him, is likely to prove the most valuable repertory of early language and manners that has yet been presented to the public.

posed in the year 1265. (It is inserted in Percy's Reliques, as is also an elegy on the death of Edward I. written in 1307.) Another, on the defeat of the French army by the Flemings, in 1301; and a ballad against the Scots, composed in 1306. As the first of these pieces may be considered as anterior to the composition of Robert of Gloucester's poem, and the others were written very soon after its conclusion, Mr. Warton seems to have employed them as terms of comparison, for the purpose of ascertaining, by internal evidence, the dates of several love-songs, devotional and moral poems, and other smaller pieces contained in the same miscellany. He was perhaps mistaken in referring some of these to so early a period as the year 1200; but they certainly appear to have been written near the middle of the thirteenth century; and as specimens of our earliest lyric compositions are not unworthy of our curiosity, the reader is here presented with two, one of which is a moral ditty, and the other a love-song; both copied from the volume of ancient songs published by Mr. Ritson, who has corrected some trifling mistakes, committed by Mr. Warton in decyphering the obsolete characters of the ancient MSS.

A DITTY

On the uncertainty of this Life, and the approach of Death.

Winter wakeneth all my care;
Now these leavés waxeth bare.
Oft I sigh, and mourné sare,
When it cometh in my thought,
Of this world's joy, how it go'th all to nought!

Now it is, and now it n'is,
All *so*[1] it ne'er, n'were I wis;
That many men saith, sooth it is,
All *goeth*[2] but God's will:
All we shall die, *though us like ill.*[3]

All that grain me groweth green;
Now, it *falloweth*[4] *all-by dene:*[5]
Jesu help, *that it be seen,*[6]
And shield us from hell,
For I *n'ot*[7] whither I shall, ne how long here dwell.

[1] As if it had never been. [2] Passeth away.
[3] Though we may dislike it? [4] Fadeth.
[5] Presently. [6] The meaning seems to be, "May "Jesu help us so that *his help may be manifest.*"
[7] Ne wot, know not.

LOVE SONG.

Between March and Averil,
  When spray beginneth to spring,
The little fowl hath their will
  In their *lud*[1] to sing.
I live in love-longing
  For *seemlokest*[2] of all thing
She may me bliss bring,
  I am in her *bandoun*.[3]
    An *hendy*[4] hap I have *y-hent*,[5]
    Ichot[6] from heaven it is me sent,
    From all women my love is lent,
      And *'light*[7] on Alisoun.

On hen[8] her hair is fair enow,
  Her brow brown, her eye black:
With *lossum*[9] cheer she on me *lok*[10]
  With middle small and well y-mok.

[1] Songs, or odes. The word *leudi* occurs, in the same sense, in the barbarous Latin of the times, as Mr. Pinkerton has justly observed.

[2] Seemliest, handsomest. [3] Command. Fr.

[4] Lucky. [5] Caught.

[6] I think. [7] Alighted.

[8] This apparently inexplicable phrase is perhaps an error of the transcribers. [9] Lovesome, lovely. [10] Laughs.

But[1] she will me to her take,
For to been her own *make*,[2]
Long to liven I shall forsake,
And, *fay*![3] fallen adown.
An hendy hap, &c.

Nights, when I wend and wake,
For thee my *wonges*[4] waxeth wan;
Lady, all for thy sake
Longing is y-lent me on!
In world is none so *wyter*[5] man,
That all her *bounty*[6] tell can:
Her *swire*[7] is whiter than the swan,
And fairest *may*[8] in town.
An hendy hap, &c.

I am, for wooing, all for-weak;
Weary, so water in *wore*:[9]
Lest any *reave*[10] me my make
I shall be *y-yearned*[11] sore.

[1] Unless.
[2] Mate.
[3] In faith. Fr.
[4] Cheeks. Sax.
[5] Wise.
[6] Excellence, *bontés*. Fr.
[7] Neck.
[8] Virgin. Sax.
[9] Wear, pool.
[10] Bereave me of.
[11] Vexed, anxious.

Better is *tholien*[1] *while*[2] sore
Than mournen evermore.
Gainest under gore,[3]
Hearken to my *roun!*[4]
An hendy hap, &c.

It is not impossible that Chaucer, at the same time that he ridiculed the romances, may have intended to laugh at the fashionable love-songs of his age; for in his rhyme of Sir Thopas he has borrowed two, apparently affected phrases, from the foregoing composition.

Sire Thopas *fell* in *love-longing*
All when he heard the throstle sing.

And afterwards:

Me dreamed all this night, pardie,
An elf-queen shall my lemman be,
And sleep *under my gore.*

[1] To suffer. Sax.

[2] Awhile.

[3] Perhaps, "Most graceful in dress." The word occurs in the same sense in Dunbar's "Twa mariit Women," verse 78. *Ungain* is still used in the provinces for the opposite idea; and *gore* appears to be the same with *gear*, dress, from the Saxon *gearwa*, *vestis*.

[4] Song.

To the same period with the foregoing we ought, perhaps, to refer the following short descriptive song, preserved by Sir John Hawkins in his History of Music:

Summer is y-comen in
  Loud sing cuckoo:
Groweth seed, and *bloweth*[1] mead,
  And springeth the wood now,
  Sing cuckoo.
Ewe bleateth after lamb,
  Loweth after calf cow:
Bullock starteth,
Buck *verteth*,[2]
  Merry sing cuckoo!
  Cuckoo, cuckoo,
  Well sings thou cuckoo,
  Ne *swick*[3] thou never now.

The first poet who occurs in the beginning of the fourteenth century, is Robert Manning, commonly called Robert de Brunne. He was, as far as we know, merely a translator. His first work, says Mr. Warton, was a metrical paraphrase of a French book, written by Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln,

[1] Blooms. [2] Goes to harbour among the fern.
[3] Cease.

called *Manuel Peche, (Manuel des Péchés)* being a treatise on the Decalogue, and on the seven deadly sins, which are illustrated with many legendary stories. It was never printed, but is preserved in the Bodleian library, MSS. No. 415, and in the British Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 1701.

His second, and more important work, is a metrical chronicle of England, in two parts, the first of which is translated from Wace's Brut d'Angleterre; and the second, from a French chronicle, written by Peter de Langtoft, an Augustine canon of Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who is supposed to have died in the reign of Edward II. and was therefore contemporary with his translator.

Robert de Brunne has furnished his biographers with the only particulars that are known concerning his life. In the prologue to his first work he says, that he had lived fifteen years at Brunne, in the priory of Sympryngham, when he began his translation, in 1303. He was therefore received into the order, A. D. 1288, and was probably born before the year 1270. With respect to his second work, he says:

Of Brunne I *am*, if any me blame,
Robert Manning is my name;

Blessed be he, of God of heaven,
That me Robert with good will *neven*.[1]
In the third Edward's time was I
When I wrote all this history.
In the house of Sixille I was *a throw*.[2]
Dan Robert of Malton that ye know
Did it write for his fellows' sake
When they willed solace make.

By this passage he seems to mean, that he was born at a place called Malton; that he had resided some time at a house in the neighbourhood called Sixhill; and that *there* he, Robert de Brunne, had composed at least a part of his poem, during the *reign of Edward III.* Mr. Warton, therefore, is perhaps inaccurate in his account of this author, when he says, that "he was a Gilbertine monk "in the monastery of Brunne, or Bourne, near "Depyng, in Lincolnshire, but he had been *before* "professed in the priory of Sixhill, a house of "the same order, and in the same county."

Mr. Hearne, the editor of Robert de Brunne, has thought fit to suppress the whole of his translation from Wace, excepting the prologue, and a few extracts which he found necessary to illustrate his glossary. The learned antiquary perhaps thought,

[1] Names. [2] For some time.

that having carefully preserved the whole of Robert of Gloucester's faithful and almost literal version of Geoffrey of Monmouth, it was unnecessary to print the more licentious paraphrase, that had passed through the medium of a Norman poet. The following description of the first interview between Vortigern and Rowena, is one of the few specimens that he has preserved. It is not given as an example of beautiful poetry, or of refined language, for its style is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the Monk of Gloucester; but it is a curious description of ancient manners.

Of chamber Rouwen so gent,
Before the king in hall *scho*[1] went;
A cup with wine she had in hand,
And her attire was *well-farand.*[2]
Before the king one knee set,
And *on* her language *scho* him gret:
"*Laverid*[3] king, Wassaille!" said she.
The king asked what should be?
On that language the king ne *couth.*[4]
A knight the language *lerid*[5] in youth;
Breg hight that knight, born Briton,
That lerid the language of *Sessoun,*[6]

[1] She. [2] Very becoming. [3] Lord.
[4] Knew. [5] Learned. [6] Saxon.

This Breg was the *latimer*[1]
What *scho* said told Vortager.
" Sir" (Breg said) " Rowen you greets,
" And king calls, and lord you *lets*.[2]
" This is their custom and their gest
" When they are at their ale or feast.
" Ilk man that loves where him think,
" Shall say, Wassaille! and to him drink
" He that *bids*[3] shall say Wassaille:
" The tother shall say again Drinkhaille.
" That, says Wassaille, drinks of the cup:
" *Kissand*[4] his fellow he gives it up.
" Drinkhaille, he says, and drinks thereof
" Kissand him in *bourd and scoff*."[5]

The king said, as the knight *gan ken*,[6]
Drinkhaille! smiland on Rowen.
Rowen drank, as her list,
And gave the king: *sine*[7] him kist.

[1] *Latinier*. Fr.; an interpreter.

[2] Esteems. [3] Invites.

[4] Kissing. This is the usual termination of the participle in old English, as it is in French.

[5] In sport and in play.

[6] " As the knight had signified." The word *gan* (began) is often used to form the tenses of verbs.

[7] Since, afterwards.

There was the first Wassaille in deed,
And that first of fame *geed.*[1]
Of that Wassaille men told great tale, &c.

Fele sithes[2] that maiden ying
Wassailled, and kist the king.
Of body she was right *avenant,*[3]
Of fair colour, with sweet *semblant.*[4]
Her attire full well it seemed,
Marvellich the king she *quemed.*[5]
Out of measure was he glad,
For of that maiden he were all mad.
Drunkenness the fiend wrought:
Of that maiden was all his thought.
A mischance that time him led;
He asked that *Paien*[6] for to wed, &c.

It is hoped that the reader will forgive a second extract from this obsolete author, in support of a conjecture started by Mr. Hearne, who (as Mr. Warton justly observes) is not often fortunate in his conjectures. He supposes that many of our ancient ballads were nothing more than extracts from metrical chronicles, written by persons of learning: and that such relations were stiled ancient

[1] Went. [2] Many times. [3] Handsome. Fr.
[4] Appearance. Fr. [5] Pleased. [6] *Payenne.* Fr. Pagan.

Gests, in opposition to *Romances*. It is not intended to defend the latter position, because the word *gest*, which signified an action or adventure, was never opposed to the word romance, which was originally applied to language only: but a considerable part of Robert de Brunne's chronicle, is in fact, broken into small parts, which have all the appearance of a series of ballads; and the author, as he proceeded in his work, acquired such a facility in rhyming, as to be enabled to write a considerable part of his translation from Langtoft, in what is now considered as the genuine ballad metre, that is to say, what de Brunne himself calls the rhyme *entrelacée*. The reader will judge from the following extract, part of which is printed by Mr. Warton, and given in its original Alexandrine form. It is a chapter beginning at Vol. I. p. 180, of Hearne's edition.

Richárd, at *Godis board*,[1]
  His mass had, and his rights:
Hear now *swilk*[2] a word
  He spake to his knights.

Of this king Philip,
  Have we no manner of help:

[1] At the altar, God's table. [2] Such.

Together, I *rede*,[1] we keep,
  That men of us *yelp*.[2]

I vow to Saint Michael,
  And *till hallows*[3] that are,
That, for woe, ne weal,
  Hithen[4] ne shall I fare,

Ne till Acre go,
  Till the castle be taken
That Philip went fro,
  For us hath *it*[5] forsaken.

" For his own default
  " *With*[6] us he has envy'.
" Go we to the assault,
  " And God us all *condie !*"[7]

The dykes were full wide
  That closed the castle about;

[1] I advise.

[2] To cry, wail, boast; the meaning is, " that men may " talk loudly of us."

[3] " To the saints that are." [4] Hence.

[5] Apparently an error of the transcriber, for *he*.

[6] Against. Sax. In the same sense we should say, he is angry *with* us. [7] Conduct.

And deep on *ilka*[1] side,
  With bankis high without.

Was there none entrée
  That to the castle *gan ligge*[2]
But a straight causée:
  At the end a draw-brigge.

With great double chains
  Drawn over the gate;
And fifty armed swains,
  Porters at that gate.

With slings and *mangnels*[3]
  They cast to king Richárd.
Our Christians, by parcells,
  Casted again-wárd.

Ten sergeants, of the best,
  His *targe*[4] gan him bear;

[1] Each.

[2] Lay.

[3] Mangonels. Fr. A sort of catapulta which threw large stones, and was employed for the purpose of battering walls.

[4] Shield; apparently a sort of mantelet serving as a portable rampart.

That eager were, and *prest*[1]
To cover him, and to *wear*.[2]

Himself, as a giánt,
The chains in two hew:
The targe was his *warránt*,[3]
That none 'till him threw.

Right unto the gate
With the targe they *geed*.[4]
Fightand *on a gate*,[5]
Under him they slew his steed.

Therefore ne will'd he cease.
Alone into the castél
Through them all will'd press:
On foot fought he full well.

And when he was within,
And fought as a wild lión,

[1] Ready. Fr. [2] Defend; *wæran*. Sax.

[3] Security; garant. Fr.

[4] Went; but *geed* seems the proper perfect tense of the verb *go*, or *gee*, as *went* is of wend. (*wændan*. Sax.)

[5] At the gate, says Mr. Hearne.—Quere if it does not mean *on a time?* as in All-*gates*, i. e. (*toutes fois*. Fr.) at all times, always.

He *fonder'd*[1] the Saracens o'twain,
And fought as a dragón.

Without, the Christians gan cry,
" Alas! Richárd is taken!"
The Normans were sorry',
Of countenance gan blacken.

To slay down and to 'stroy,
Never will'd they stint:
They left, for dead nor 'noy,[2]
Ne for no wound nor dint.

That in went all their press,
Maugré the Saracens all,
And found Richárd on *dés*[3]
Fightand, and won the hall.

[1] Forced. (Hearne's Glossary) Perhaps, however, it is a mistake of the transcriber for *sonder'd*, i. e. *sundered, separated.*

[2] They would not leave off, either on account of the dead who fell round them, or of the annoyance of the enemy.

[3] Probably a *platform*: and for this reason the principal table in the hall, being elevated above the common floor, was particularly called the *Des*. The canopy placed over such a table afterwards acquired the same name. Hence a good deal of dispute about the meaning of the word; but the conjecture here given, which is Mr. Tyrwhitt's, appears the most reasonable.

Nobody but he alone
  Unto the Christians came;
And slein he had ilk-one
  The lords, but three he *name.*[1]

With those three alive,
  His messengers went;
Till Acre gan they drive,
  To Philip made presént.

Mr. Warton has given us a very long extract from an English translation of a work written by Grosthead, Bishop of Lincoln, in French verse, and called by Leland, Chateau d'Amour, which he conjectures to be from the pen of Robert de Brunne; and Hearne ascribes to him, though perhaps without reason, the metrical English romance of Richard Cœur de Lion. He was upon the whole an industrious, and certainly for the time, an elegant writer; and his extraordinary facility of rhyming (a talent, indeed, in which he has been seldom surpassed), must have rendered his works an useful study to succeeding versifiers.

[1] Took. Sax.

CHAPTER V.

Reign of Edward II.—Change in the Language produced by frequent Translations from the French.—Minstrels—Sources of Romance.—Adam Davie—Specimens of his Life of Alexander.—Robert Baston.

During the first period of our poetry, comprehending the greater part of the thirteenth, and about half of the fourteenth, century, our English versifiers are divided into two classes, the ecclesiastics, and lay-minstrels, who are generally distinguished from each other by a very different choice of subjects; the former exhibiting their talents in metrical lives of the saints, or in rhyming chronicles; the latter in satirical pieces, and love-songs. Tales of chivalry, being equally the favourites of all descriptions of men, were, to a certain degree, the common property of both.

There is reason to believe, that a marked difference of style and language, was apparent in the compositions of these rival poets, because the inferior orders of the priesthood, and the several

monastic societies, being chiefly conversant with the inhabitants of the country and of the villages, were likely to retain more of the Saxon phraseology, and to resist the influx of French innovations much longer than their competitors: and it is principally to this circumstance that it seems reasonable to attribute those peculiarities of style, which Mr. Warton thought he discovered in Robert of Gloucester, and which he has ascribed to the provincial situation of the writer. The northern provinces, it is true, on account, perhaps, of their long subjection to the Danes, are represented by John de Trevisa (in a passage often quoted) as differing materially in their pronunciation from those of the south: but Gloucester is not a northern county. The charge of provincial barbarism might, with more justice, be imputed to Robert de Brunne, as being a native of Yorkshire; but he has taken care to assure us, that his simple and unadorned diction was the result of care and design; that he considers his "fellows" as the depositaries of pure and true English; that he

——" made nought for no *disours*,[1]
" Ne for no *seggers*,[2] no *harpours*,

[1] Discurs. Fr. Reciters.

[2] *Sayers*, the English name for the same profession.

"But *for the love of simple men*
"That *strange English* cannot ken."

These *disours* or *seggers*, he tells us, took the most unwarrantable liberties with the diction of the works they recited; and he omits no opportunity of protesting against their licentious innovations in our language.

The reader who shall take the pains of comparing a few pages of the glossary annexed by Mr. Tyrwhitt to his edition of Chaucer, with that which Mr. Hearne has compiled, for the illustration of Robert de Brunne, will probably think that our author's complaints were just, and that the language of the city and inns of court, was much more infected with Gallicisms, than that of the monasteries; although a rapid change in both, appears to have taken place during the reign of Edward III. Many of the Norman words then introduced, have, indeed, long since become obsolete, and the Saxon has recovered its superiority; because the gradual dissemination of wealth, and liberty, and learning, among the common people, has, in some measure, blended in our language all the provincial dialects; but the torrent of fashion, at the period of which we are now treating, was irresistible. It was, perhaps, in some degree assisted by the practice of the

dignified ecclesiastics, who, when they did not write in Latin, universally affected to use the French language; but it is principally to be ascribed to the numerous translations, which were made at this time, from the French writers of those fabulous histories which we now call *Romances*. Such translations were hastily written, because eagerly called for; and their authors took the liberty (in which they were imitated by the disours or reciters) of admitting without scruple such "*strange*" words as happened to suit their rhyme, as well as those for which they could not immediately recollect the correspondent term in English.

As the public reciters here mentioned by Robert de Brunne, may possibly be unknown to many readers, it will perhaps be proper in this place to take some notice of them, as well as of the minstrels, with whom they were nearly connected.

It appears, that during the reign of our Norman kings, a poet, who was also expected to unite with the talent of versifying, those of music and recitation, was a regular officer in the royal household, as well as in those of the more wealthy nobles, whose courts were composed upon the same model. This practice seems to have originated in the admiration, which all the northern nations entertained for their ancient *Scalds;* and it gave rise to the appellation

of *Minstrel* (ministrellus, an officer or servant), which, therefore (as Dr. Percy has observed in his learned Dissertation on this subject), was not strictly synonymous with those of *jougleur*, or *jongleur* (joculator), called, in old English, a *glee-man*, *juggler*, or *jangler;* because the latter might or might not be attached to a particular patron, and frequently travelled from castle to castle, for the purpose of reciting his compositions during the principal festivals. But as it is very difficult for the same person to attain equal excellence in all the sister arts, the professions of the poet, the harper, and the reciter, were afterwards undertaken by several associates, all of whom, on account of the privileges attached to the official minstrels, thought fit to assume the same honourable but equivocal title.

That these purveyors of poetry and music to the king and principal barons were, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, a privileged class, is perfectly certain from the universal testimony of contemporary writers. Indeed they were essential, not only to their amusement, but, in a great measure, to their education; because even the use of arms, and the management of a horse, were scarcely more necessary to a courteous knight, than the talent of playing on the harp, and composing a

song in praise of his mistress. But in the course of the fourteenth century the minstrels, in France at least, had greatly declined in talents and reputation. There was a street at Paris, called *la Rue St. Julien des Menétriers*, peculiarly appropriated to their habitation; and they had a fraternity, or *confrérie* in the church of that saint, the well-known patron of hospitality: but these minstrels are described as a set of pantomimical fidlers, accompanied by monkies or bears, who were hired at weddings for the amusement of the guests: so much had they degenerated from the ingenious inventors of the fabliaux.

The history of this order of men in England is, for various reasons, very obscure and embarrassed. On the one hand it is evident, that if English began to be introduced at court as a colloquial language, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, it was not yet considered, either by our kings, or by the nobles, or by the dignitaries of the church, as fitted for literary purposes: and as our native minstrels, not having yet attempted any original poetry, could only have offered to their courtly audience, translations much more barbarous, and at the same time less familiar to their ears, than the compositions of the French trouveurs, it is not

likely that such rivals could have displaced the Norman minstrels, already established in the post for which they were candidates. On the other hand, the testimony of Robert de Brunne to the existence of a body of *disours*, or *seggers*, accustomed to recite English metrical compositions in public, who were listened to with applause, and habituated to make arbitrary alterations in the language or metre of such compositions, is direct and positive. The most obvious solution of this difficulty would be to suppose, that the more opulent inhabitants of the towns, in imitation of their superiors, had adopted the mode of introducing at their banquets the amusements of music and recitation, and thus laid the foundation of a native minstrelsy on the French model; and this order of men being once established, might, on the decline of the rival language, find their way to the castles of our nobility; to which they would be recommended, by their previous exhibitions at the neighbouring fairs, where they never failed to appear as attendants on the merchants.

Indeed we have numerous proofs of their increasing popularity; for Chaucer, in his address to his Troilus and Cressida, tells us that it was intended to be "read or elles *sung*," which must relate to the chanting recitation of the minstrels;

and a considerable part of our old poetry is simply addressed to an *audience*, without any mention of readers.

That our English minstrels at any time united all the talents of the profession, and were at once poets, and reciters, and musicians, is extremely doubtful: but that they excited and directed the efforts of their contemporary poets to a particular species of composition, is as evident, as that a body of actors must influence the exertions of theatrical writers. They were, at a time when reading and writing were rare accomplishments, the principal medium of communication between authors and the public; and their memory in some measure supplied the deficiency of manuscripts, and probably preserved much of our early literature till the invention of printing: so that their history, if it could be collected, would be by no means uninteresting. But our materials for this purpose are too scanty, to enable us to ascertain the date of their formation, their progress, or their disappearance. Judging from external evidence, we should be disposed to place the period of their greatest celebrity, a little before the middle of the fifteenth century; because at that time our language had been successively improved by the writings of Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate. Much

wealth and luxury had been introduced by the two victorious reigns of Edward III. and Henry V.; and the country had not yet suffered any distress either from internal revolution, or from the length and disastrous termination of the war with France. The general poverty and discontent that prevailed during the subsequent period, the declension of chivalry, and the almost utter extirpation of our principal nobles, during the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, must have been fatal to the prosperity of the minstrels; and two causes of a different nature, viz. the invention of printing in A. D. 1474, and the taste for religious disputation introduced by Henry VIII. may have tended to complete their ruin.

Though the minstrel character be now lost both in England and France, the traces of it are not universally effaced. In Wales, the modern harper is occasionally found to possess the accomplishments of the ancient bard: and among the Italians, the *improvisatori* of Rome and Florence, who are usually ready to attend the table of a traveller, and greet him with an extemporary poem on any subject which he shall prescribe, and protracted to a length which is only measured by his patience, are no bad representations of the antique minstrels; particularly when they are accompanied

(as frequently happens) by an attendant musician, who gives the tone to their recitative, and fills up the pauses between the stanzas by a few notes on his instrument. The third character, or *disour*, is also to be found in many parts of Italy, but particularly at Venice; where, mounted on a temporary scaffolding, or sometimes on a stool or barrel, he recites, from memory, whole cantos of Ariosto.

The situation of a minstrel prescribed to him the choice of his subject. Addressing himself to an audience who lived only for the purpose of fighting, and who considered their time as of little value when otherwise employed, he was sure of being listened to with patience and credulity, so long as he could tell of heroes and enchanters: and he could be at no loss for either, because the histories of all the heroes and enchanters that the world had produced, were to be found in a few volumes of easy access.

As vanity is not easily subdued, a people who are not quite satisfied with their present insignificance, will often be tempted to indemnify themselves by a retrospective warfare on their enemies; and will be the more prodigal in assigning triumphs to their heroic ancestors, because those who in former ages contested the battle, can no longer be

brought forward to dispute the claim of victory. This will explain the numerous triumphs of King Arthur: we have already seen, that a book containing the relation of his exploits, and of those of his knights of the round table, and of his faithful enchanter, Merlin, together with the antecedent history of the British kings, from the destruction of Troy, was purchased in Brittany, about the year 1100, by Walter, arch-deacon of Oxford, a learned antiquary of those days, and confided to Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welch Benedictine monk, who translated it into Latin, with some additions and interpolations. The French translations of Wace and Rusticien de Pise, and the Saxon and English versions of Layamon and Robert de Brunne, laid open this mass of history, to readers of every description.

A second work, equally abounding in marvellous adventures, and apparently written about the same time with Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle, is the history of Charlemagne and the twelve peers of France, forged under the name of Turpin, a monk of the eighth century, who, for his services against the Saracens, was raised to the archbishoprick of Rheims. The real author was perhaps a Spaniard. This work was translated from Latin into French, by MICHAEL DE HAINES, in 1207.

The third source of romantic fiction, was the history of Troy. Homer's works were unknown at the period of which we are speaking, but the story was kept alive in two Latin pieces, which passed under the names of Dares Phrygius, and Dictys Cretensis; and from these, as we have already seen, a French poem on the Tojan war, had been compiled by Benoit de St. More, the contemporary and rival of Wace. A more improved compilation from the same sources, under the title of Historia de Bello Trojano, comprehending the Theban and Argonautic stories, from Ovid, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, was written by Guido de Colonna, a native of Messina, about the year 1260.

Alexander the Great was known to the writers of romance, not only by translations from Quintus Curtius, a writer much admired in the middle ages, but also by a history much better suited to the purposes of the historians of chivalry, originally written in Persic, and translated into Greek, under the assumed name of Callisthenes, by *Simeon Seth*, keeper of the wardrobe at Constantinople, under the emperor Michael Ducas, about the year 1070. Such a narrative could not fail of obtaining a very general circulation. A Latin translation of it is quoted by Giraldus Cambrensis; and the famous Roman d'Alexandre, written (as Fauchet tells us)

about the year 1200, by four confederates "en "jonglerie," appears to be partly a paraphrase of that translation.

These four works may be considered as the foundation on which was erected the vast Gothic fabric of romance; and materials for the superstructure were readily found, in an age when anecdotes and apologues were thought very necessary even to discourses delivered from the pulpit, and when all the fables that could be gleaned from ancient writings, or from the relations of travellers, were collected into story-books, and preserved by the learned for that purpose.

The Gesta Romanorum, a work of this description, which is still very common, appears to have had so great an influence on the literature of Europe, during the romantic ages, that Mr. Warton has thought it deserving of a dissertation of ninety-seven pages. He also mentions a manuscript collection of 215 stories, preserved in the Museum, which was evidently compiled by a professed preacher, for the use of the monastic societies. The legendary lives of the saints, were no bad repositories of anecdote: and the bards of Armorica, who had supplied Geoffrey of Monmouth's regular history, continued to contribute detached fragments, or what we might now call memoirs, of the court of King Arthur,

which were successively converted into French lays and fabliaux.

If we should search in real history for a model of that imaginary excellence, which constituted a hero of romance, we should find it in the person of our Richard I. He was profusely liberal, particularly to the minstrels: he was, perhaps, himself a minstrel; he possessed the most astonishing bodily strength, and the most intrepid valour, sufficiently blended with enthusiasm, and directed to no intelligible purpose. The poets whom he patronized, would have been no less deficient in taste than in gratitude, had they failed to place him, after his death, among the heroes whom he imitated, and perhaps surpassed; particularly as the materials for his apotheosis were to be found in all languages and countries. Tanner mentions (says Mr. Warton), as a poet of England, one Gulielmus Peregrinus, who accompanied Richard I. into the Holy Land, and sung his achievements there, in a Latin poem entitled Odoeporicon Ricardi Regis, dedicated to Herbert, archbishop of Canterbury, and Stephen Turnham, a captain in the expedition. He is called "Poeta per eam ætatem excellens." The French minstrels in Richard's army were so numerous, that the writer of his life, would only be embarrassed by the trouble of selection; and it may be supposed

that his romance must have been finished by the middle of the thirteenth century, because it is referred to by Robert of Gloucester, as a work already in general circulation. When, or by whom it was translated, is not known; but as the exploits of so popular a monarch, were likely to find their way into the language of his subjects, as soon as the art of rhyming began to be generally practised in England, we may safely refer the translation to the reign of Edward II.

To the same period, Mr. Warton also assigns the popular stories of SIR GUY, THE SQUIRE OF LOW DEGREE, SIR DEGORE, KING ROBERT OF SICILY, THE KING OF TARS, IPPOMEDON, and *La Mort Artur;* from all of which he has given us extracts. But as he suspects that they have, in common with the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, undergone considerable alterations in their language, from frequent transcription, it may be proper to dismiss them for the present, and pass on to the only writer of English rhymes in this reign, whose name has been transmitted to us, and whose works appear to have been preserved in their original simplicity of language: this is Adam Davie. "He may "be placed (says Mr. Warton) about the year 1312. "I can collect no circumstances of his life, but "that he was marshall of Stratford le Bow, near

" London. He has left several poems, which are " almost as much forgotten as his name. Only " one MSS. of these pieces now remains, which " seems to be coeval with its author; it is in the " Bodleian library, MSS. Laud. i. 74. fol. mem- " bran. It is much damaged, and on that account " is often illegible."

Adam Davie's works consist of Visions; the Battle of Jerusalem; the Legend of St. Alexius; Scripture Histories of fifteen tokens before the day of judgment; Lamentations of Souls; and the Life of Alexander. This last is his principal work, and, as we are told, well deserves to be printed entire. It is founded on Simeon Seth's history, lately mentioned, but with many passages that are apparently borrowed from the French Roman d'Alexandre.

The following is the description of a splendid procession made by Queen Olympias:

In they time, fair and *jolif*,[1]
Olympias, that fair wife,
Woulden make a rich feast
Of knights, and ladies *honést*,[2]
Of burgess, and of juglers,
And of men of each *mestiers*.[3]

[1] Pretty. Fr. [2] Well-bred. Fr.
[3] Trade, occupation. Fr.

Mickle she desireth to shew her body,
Her fair hair, her face ruddy,
To have *los*,[1] and all praising:
And all is folly! by Heaven's King!—
In fair attire, in diverse guise,
Many there rode in rich wise.
So did the dame Olympias
For to shew her *gentil*[2] face.
A mule, all so white so milk,
With saddle of gold, *sambuc*[3] of silk,
Was y-brought to the queen,
And many bell of silver sheen,
Y-fastened on *orfraies of mound*[4]
That hangen near down to ground.
Forth she fared mid her rout;
A thousand ladies of rich suit.

[1] Commendation. Fr.

[2] Elegant. Fr.

[3] A saddle-cloth, or housing. Fr.

[4] Orfrais, aurifrigium, is gold embroidery. It *appears*, however, from a passage in Mandeville, to have meant a *border* of embroidery. "And all the robes ben orfrayed *alle* "*abouten*—the second thousand is all clothed in clothes "diapred of red silk, all wrought with gold, and the *orfrayes* "set full of great pearls," &c. 8vo. edit. p. 280. The meaning of the word mound is not easy to ascertain: Does it relate to *raised* or *embossed* work? or does it mean embroidery of *pure* gold, from the French word *monder*?

A sparrow-hawk that was *honest*
So sat on the lady's fist.
Four trumps tofore her blew;
Many men that day her knew:
A hundred thousand, and eke mo,
All *alonton*[1] her unto.
All the town be-hanged was,
Against the lady Olympias.
Orgues, *chymbes*, each manner *glee*,[2]
Was *drynan*[3] *ayen*[4] that lady free.
Withouten the town's *muréy*[5]
Was *mered*[6] each manner play.
There was knights tornaying,
- - - - - - also wrestling.
Of lions' chace, and bear-baiting,
A bay of boar, of bull slayting.
All the city was behung
With rich *samyts*[7] and *pelles*[8] long.

[1] Went; from *aller*, Fr. says Mr. Warton. Quere, if it be not *alentour?*

[2] Organs, cymbals, and all sorts of *music*.

[3] Ringing? *drignon*, Old Fr. is a chime of bells. Vide La Combe, Dict. du Vieux Lang.

[4] Against; in the presence of.

[5] Walls. Fr.

[6] Probably *seen*, *gazed at*; *miré*. Fr.

[7] Satins. Fr.

[8] Palls, or perhaps furs; *pelisses*. Fr.

Dame Olympias, mid this press
Single rode, all mantle-less.
Her yellow hair was fair-attired,
Mid rich string of gold, wired;
It *helid*[1] her abouten all
To her *gentil* middle small:
Bright and sheen was her face;
Every fair-head in her was.

The following is part of a description of a battle:

Alexander made a cry hardi
"Ore tost, *aby, aby!*"[2]
Then the knights of Achaye
Justed with them of Araby:
Egypt justed with them of Tyre;
Simple knights with rich sire
There n'was forgift, ne forbearing,
Between Vavasor ne king.
Tofore,[3] men mighten, and behind,
Conteck[4] seek, and conteck find.
With Persians foughten the *Gregeys*:[5]
There was cry, and great *honteys!*[6]

[1] Hid. Helan. Sax.
[2] Perhaps the same as *abois;* the cry when the stag is taken.
[3] Before.
[4] Contest.
[5] Greek; Gregeois. Fr.
[6] Shame. Fr.

There might knight find his peer;
There *les*[1] many his *destrier*.[2]
There was quick, in little *thrawe*[3]
Many gentil knight y-slawe.
Many arm, many *heved*,[4]
Some from the body reaved.
Many gentle lavedy
There *les* quick her *ami*.
There was many *maim*[5] y-led,
Many fair *penséll*[6] be-bled
There was swords *liklaking*[7]
There was spears *bathing*,[8]
Both kings there sans doute,
Beeth in dash'd with all their rout.—
Many lands near and far
Lesen their lord in that war.

[1] Lost. Sax.

[2] War-horse, Fr.; so called from its being led on the *right hand*.

[3] Time. [4] Head.

[5] Maimed. [6] Standard. Fr.

[7] Clashing. An unusual word, like *diquetis*, Fr. from which it is perhaps derived.

[8] Perhaps here is an omission by the transcriber, and the line should run thus, "There was spears *in blood* bathing," otherwise we do not know what the kings and their route *dashed* into.

[*Earth*[1]] quaked of their riding;
The weather thicked of their crying:
The blood of them that were yslawe
Ran by floods to the *law*.[2]

The procession of Olympias described in the first of these specimens, is given by Gower (Conf. Am. fol. 137; edit. 1554.), but is by no means equal in spirit or elegance to the picture drawn by Adam Davie: and we probably should search in vain among our poets, anterior to Chaucer, for lines so full of animation, as the four last in the foregoing extract. The language, as far as we can judge from the specimens preserved by Mr. Warton, is exactly such as we should expect, and marks that popularity, which French phrases were beginning to acquire, and which continued to increase, during the whole of the following reign. Upon the whole, it is certainly to be wished, that some editor may be found, who shall have the courage to decipher the obsolete manuscript of Adam Davie's romance of Alexander, and give it entire to the public.

A poet named Robert Baston, a carmelite friar of Scarborough, is mentioned as attending Edward II. to the siege of Stirling castle. He was taken

[1] Here the word has been erased.

[2] Low, *i. e.* to the low grounds.

prisoner by the Scots, and compelled, for his ransome, to write a panegyric on Robert Bruce. This was probably in English; and he is described by Bale as the author of "Poemata et Rythmi, Tragediæ et Comediæ *vulgares;*" but his only poem now extant, viz. an account of the siege of Stirling castle, is written in Latin monkish hexameters. It is not easy to understand what Bale meant by "tragediæ et comediæ," for the words do not always imply scenic representations. It appears, indeed, that before the reign of Edward II. many Scriptural histories, in dialogue, were exhibited in our churches, under the name of mysteries or miracles; but these dialogues were not poems: on the other hand, many poems were written about this period under the name of tragedies and comedies, but these poems were not in dialogue.

CHAPTER VI.

Reign of Edward III.—The Hermit of Hampole.—Lawrence Minot.—Pierce Ploughman's Vision—Specimens of the Vision.—Pierce the Ploughman's Creed—Specimen.

THE first English poet that occurs in the reign of Edward III. is Richard Rolle, hermit of the order of St. Augustine, and doctor of divinity, who lived a life of solitude near the nuns of Hampole, four miles from Doncaster, in Yorkshire. He was a very popular and learned, though inelegant writer in Latin, on theological subjects; and his pretensions to the character of an English poet are founded on a metrical paraphrase of the book of Job, another of the Lord's Prayer, seven penitential psalms, and a piece in seven parts, called "the Prick of Con-"science," all of which are usually attributed to him. Mr. Warton, however, suspects that they were all translated by contemporary poets, from the Latin prose originals composed by him; and he has proved by a long extract, that they are not worth transcribing. The Hermit of Hampole died in 1349.

The next poet in succession is Laurence Minot, whose name was unknown to our antiquaries, till Mr. Tyrwhitt, in searching after the manuscripts of Chaucer, accidentally discovered a copy of his works, consisting of a collection of poems upon the events of the former part of this reign. It is sufficient in this place to have mentioned his name, as a very elegant edition of his works, accompanied with all the illustrations that could be drawn from contemporary history, has, within these very few years, been published by Mr. Ritson.

Laurence Minot appears to have flourished about the year 1350, a few years after which was written the very curious poem called "The Vision of Pierce "Ploughman." Its reputed author is Robert Langland, a secular priest, born at Mortimer's Cleobury, in Shropshire, and fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.* His work is divided into twenty distinct passus, or breaks, forming a series of visions, which he supposes to have appeared to him while he was asleep,

* That Robert Langland was the author of this work, seems to have been solely admitted on the authority of Crowley, its earliest editor. The only remaining evidence on the subject appears to indicate, that the writer's name was *William*: but a discussion which can only end in uncertainty is not worth the undertaking.

after a fatiguing walk amongst the Malvern Hills, in Worcestershire.

A dream is certainly the best excuse that can be offered, for the introduction of allegorical personages, and for any incoherences that may result from the conduct of a dialogue, carried on between such fanciful actors: and it must be confessed, that this writer has taken every advantage of a plan so comprehensive and convenient, and has dramatized his subject with great ingenuity. His work may be considered as a long moral and religious discourse, and as such, is full of good sense and piety; but it is farther rendered interesting, by a succession of incidents, enlivened sometimes by strong satire, and sometimes by the keenest ridicule on the vices of all orders of men, and particularly of the religious. It is ornamented also by many fine specimens of descriptive poetry, in which the genius of the author appears to great advantage.

But his most striking peculiarity is the structure of his versification, which is the subject of a very learned and ingenious essay in the second volume of the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." His verses are not distinguished from prose, either by a determinate number of syllables, or by rhyme, or indeed by any other apparent test, except the studied recurrence of the same letter three times in each

line; a contrivance which we should not suspect of producing much harmony, but to which (as Crowley, the original editor of the poem, justly observes) even a modern ear will gradually become accustomed. This measure is referred by Dr. Percy to one of the 136 different kinds of metre which Wormius has discovered amongst the works of the Islandic poets; but the principal difficulty, is to account for its adoption in Pierce Ploughman's Vision.

Perhaps this alliterative metre having become a favourite with the northern Scalds, during the interval which elapsed between the departure of the Anglo-Saxons from Scandinavia, and the subsequent migration of the Danes, may have been introduced by the latter into those provinces of England, where they established themselves; and, being adopted by the numerous body of minstrels, for which those provinces were always distinguished, may have maintained a successful struggle against the Norman ornament of rhyme, which was universally cultivated by the poets of the south. This at least seems to be suggested by Mr. Tyrwhitt, who observes, that Giraldus Cambrensis describes by the name of "Annomination," what we now call *alliteration*, and informs us that it was highly fashionable amongst the English, and even the

Welsh poets of his time. That it effectually stood its ground in some parts of the kingdom during the reign of Edward III. and even long after, appears from the numerous imitations of Langland's style, which are still preserved; and it is evident, that a sensible and zealous writer in the cause of religion and morality, was not likely to sacrifice those great objects, together with his own reputation, to the capricious wish of inventing a new, or of giving currency to an obsolete, mode of versification.

Mr. Warton is of opinion, that "this imposed "constraint of seeking identical initials, and the "affectation of obsolete English, by demanding a "constant and necessary departure from the natural "and obvious forms of expression, while it cir-"cumscribed the powers of our author's genius, "contributed also to render his manner extremely "perplexed, and to disgust the reader with ob-"scurity." But it may be doubted whether a work apparently addressed to the plain sense of common readers was written with an affectation of obsolete English; and much of its obscurity may perhaps be ascribed to the negligence of the transcriber of the MSS. from which the printed copy is taken. Neither is it certain that the "imposed constraint of seeking identical initials" is at all more embarrassing to those, whose ear is accustomed to such a scheme

of poetry, than the imposed constraint of identical final sounds; a constraint which, by exacting from the author, greater attention to the mode of expressing his thoughts, is rather likely to increase than to diminish, the precision and clearness of his language.

The following extract will give a good general idea of this author's manner, because it contains some of those practical and simple precepts, in which he so much abounds, and a little accidental ridicule of physicians, together with a very curious picture of the domestic economy of the poor of this country, in the middle of the fourteenth century. It is a scene in which Pierce Ploughman, the favourite character of the piece, addresses himself to HUNGER, and (to use the expressions in the margin of the original) "prayeth hunger to teach him a *leech-craft* for him and for his servants."

I wot well, quoth Hunger, what sickness you aileth.
Ye have *manged*[1] over much; and that maketh you groan:
And I *hote*[2] thee, quoth Hunger, as thou thy *heal*[3] willest,
That thou drink, no day, ere thou dine somewhat:

[1] Eaten. Fr. [2] Advise, exhort. [3] Health

Eat not; I hote thee, ere hunger thee take,
And send thee of his sauce, to savour with thy lips:
And keep some 'till supper-time, and sit not too long,
And rise up, ere appetite have eaten his fill.
Let not SIR SURFEIT sit on thy board:
Leve[1] him not, for he is lecherous and licorous of tongue;
And after many manner of meat his maw is a-hunger'd.
And if thou diet thee thus, I dare lay my ears
That Physick shall his furred cloak for his food sell,
And his cloak of *Calabrie*,[2] with all his *knops*[3] of gold,
And be fain, by my faith, his physick to *let*.[4]
And learn to labour with hand; for *live-lode*[5] is sweet.
For murderers are many leeches: Lord hem amend!
They do men die, by their drinks, ere destiny it would.

[1] Believe. Sax.

[2] The physicians of the middle ages were principally Jews, who learnt their art from the Arabians. A considerable colony of this people was established in the kingdom of Naples. The medical school of Salerno is well known.

[3] Buttons. Sax.; literally, knobs. [4] To leave.

[5] Life-leading; we now say livelihood.

By St. Paul (quoth Pierce) these are profitable words!
Wend thee Hunger when thou wilt, yet well be thou ever!
For this is a lovely lesson, Lord it thee for-yield!

Bihote[1] God! (quoth Hunger) hence ne will I wend,
Till I have dined, by this day, and drunken both.

I have no penny, (quoth Pierce) pullets for to buy,
Ne neither goose, ne *grys;*[2] but two green cheeses,
A few curds, and cream, and an *haver-cake*[3]
And two loaves, of beans and bran, bake for my folk.
And *yet,*[4] I say by my soul, I have no salt bacon,
Ne no *cokeney,*[5] by Christ! collops for to make.
And I have parsely, and *porets,*[6] and many cole-plants,
And eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare
To draw a-field my dung the while the drought lasteth;

[1] If God permit?
[2] Grys is a pig. Bannatyne Gloss.
[3] Oat-cake.
[4] Still farther.
[5] Cook.
[6] Leeks. Fr.

And by this live-lod I must live 'till Lammas time.
By that, I hope to have harvest in my croft;
And then I may *dight*[1] *my dinner as my dear liketh.*
[*Here, says the margin, the poor folk feed Hunger*]
And all the poor people tho, peas-cods fet;
Beans and baken apples they brought in their laps,
Chyboles,[2] and chervil, and ripe cherries many,
And proffer'd Pierce these presents to please with Hunger.
All Hunger ate in haste, and asked after more:
Then poor folk, for fear, fed Hunger *yern*[3]
With green poret, and peasen; to poison him they thought.
By that it nighed to harvest; new corn came *to-cheaping*:[4]
Then was the folk *fain*,[5] and fed Hunger with the best;
With good ale, as GLUTTON taught, and *gart*[6] Hunger asleep.

And tho would WASTER no work, but wandren about;
Ne no beggar eat bread that beans in were,

[1] *Dress* my dinner as *me* pleaseth.
[2] Ciboule. Fr. Cipolla. Ital.; a species of onion.
[3] Eagerly. Sax.
[4] Cheap.
[5] Glad. Sax.
[6] Made. Sax.

But of *coket*[1] and *clermatin*,[2] or else of clean wheat.
Ne no half-penny ale in no wise drink,
But of the best and the brownest that in *burth*[3] is to sell.
Labourers that have no land to live on but their hands
Deigned not to dine a day *night*[4] old *worts*:[5]
May no penny-ale them pay, nor no piece of bacon;
But if it be fresh flesh, other fish fried, other bake,
And that *chaud or plus chaud*, for chilling of her maw, &c.

The following passage has the marginal admonition "Reade thys;" indeed the prediction with which it concludes is very curious.

And now is Religion a rider, a roamer by street,
A leader of *lovedays*,[6] and a loud beggar,

[1] A particular sort of bread.

[2] Perhaps another sort of bread used at breakfast.

[3] Booth? or borough?

[4] In some editions the word *not* is omitted, which will only increase the perplexity. The meaning, as the line stands here (from edit. 1550), seems to be, that "labourers, &c. refused their usual dinner (or rather supper) of old worts or cabbage;" this, however, is strangely expressed.

[5] Cabbage.

[6] Loveday (says Tyrwhitt, note on v. 260.) is a day appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.

A pricker of a palfrey from manor to manor,
An heap of hounds at his——as he lord were:
And, but if his *knave*[1] kneel, that shall his cope bring,
He loured on him, and asked who taught him courtesy?
Little had lords to done to give lands from their heirs
To Religious, that have no ruth though it rain on their altars.
In many places there the parsons be by hemself at ease;
Of the poor have they no pity: and that is her charity!
And they letten them as lords, her lands lie so broad.
AND THERE SHALL COME A KING and confess you religious,
And beat you, as the Bible telleth, for breaking of your rule,
And amend *monials*,[2] monks, and canons,
And put hem to her penance—
And then shall the Abbot of Abingdon, and all his issue for ever
HAVE A KNOCK OF A KING, AND INCURABLE THE WOUND.

[1] A male servant [2] Nuns.

The limits of the present publication will not admit of many extracts from this curious work, but the following description, in which NATURE, or KIND, is represented as sending forth diseases from the planets, at the command of CONSCIENCE, and of his attendants AGE and DEATH, is too striking to be omitted: particularly since it appears to have suggested to Milton his sublime description of the Lazar-house. (Paradise Lost, B. xi. l. 475). This coincidence is remarked by Mrs. Cooper, in her "Muses' Library."

KIND[1] Conscience then heard, and came out of the planets,
And sent forth his *Forriers*,[2] fevers, and fluxes,
Coughs, and *cardiacles*,[3] cramps, and tooth-aches,
Boils, and blotches, and burning agues,
Phrenesis, and foul evil, foragers of KIND!
There was "Harowe! and help! here cometh KIND!
"With DEATH that is dreadful, to undo us all!"—
Age the hoar, he was in the van-ward,
And bare the banner before DEATH; by right he it claimed.
KIND came after, with many keen sores,

[1] Nature. [2] Foragers, Fr.
[3] Cardialgia, heart-ache. Gr.

As pox and pestilences, and much people shent.
So KIND, through corruptions, killed full many;
Death came driving after, and all to dust pashed,
Kings and kaysers, knights and popes.
Many a lovely lady, and leman of knights,
Swooned, and swelted for sorrow of Death's dints,
&c.

The editions of Pierce Ploughman that usually occur, are those of Crowley, of which, as Dr. Percy informs us, there were three published in the same year, 1550. A much scarcer edition is that of 1561, published by *Owen Rogers*,* to which is annexed a poem of nearly the same tendency, and written in the same metre, called Pierce the Ploughman's *Creed*. It was evidently composed after the death of Wickliffe, which happened in 1384, and is therefore more modern than many of the poems of Chaucer, but is noticed here on account of its style and subject.

Mr. Warton says, that in a copy of the Creed presented to him by the Bishop of Gloucester, and once belonging to Mr. Pope, the latter, in his own hand, has inserted the following abstract of its plan.

* Beside the editions of Pierce Ploughman, by Anstey and Rogers, there was an intermediate one by Reginald Wolfe, in 1553.

"An ignorant plain man, having learned his "Paternoster and Ave-Mary, wants to learn his "Creed. He asks different religious men of the "several orders, to teach it him: first of a Friar-"Minor, who bids him beware of the Carmelites, "and assures him they can teach him nothing, "describing their faults, &c.; but that the friars-"minors shall save him whether he learns his creed "or not. He goes next to the Friars-Preachers, "whose magnificent monastery he describes: there "he meets a fat friar, who declaims againt the "Augustines. They rail at the Minorites. He goes "to the Carmes; they abuse the Dominicans, but "promise him salvation, without the creed, for "money. He leaves them with indignation, and "finds an honest poor ploughman in the field, and "tells him how he was disappointed by the four "orders. The ploughman answers with a long in-"vective against them."

For the full explanation of this poem, it is essential to premise, that in consequence of the many abuses which had gradually perverted the monastic institutions, it became necessary, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, to establish a new class of friars, who, possessing no regular revenues, and relying for a subsistence on the general reverence which they should attract by superior talent, or

severer sanctity of manners, should become the effectual and permanent support of the papal authority against those heresies which were beginning to infect the church, as well as against the jealousy of the civil power. The new institution consisted of four mendicant orders: the Franciscans, who were also called friars-minors, or minorites, or gray-friars: the Augustine, or Austin friars, and Dominicans, or friars-preachers, or black-friars: and the Carmelites, or white-friars.

For the purpose of quickening their zeal, the popes bestowed on them, many new and uncommon privileges; the right of travelling where they pleased, of conversing with persons of all descriptions, of instructing youth, and of hearing confessions, and bestowing absolution without reserve: and as these advantages naturally attracted to the privileged orders, all the novices who were distinguished by zeal or talent, excited their emulation, and ensured the respect of the people, they quickly eclipsed all their rivals, and realised the most sanguine hopes, that had been entertained from their establishment.

The mendicant orders of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but particularly the Dominicans, very nearly resembled the Jesuits of modern times. In these orders were found the most learned men,

and the most popular preachers of the age. The almost exclusive charge of the national education enabled them to direct the public taste and opinions: the confessional chair placed the consciences of their penitents at their disposal; and, their leading members having discovered that an association, in which individual talents are systematically directed to some general purpose, is nearly irresistible, soon insinuated themselves into the most important offices of church and state, and guided at their will, the religion and politics of Europe. But prosperity, as usual, made them indolent and imprudent. They had long been envied and hated, and the progress of general civilization, raised up numberless rivals, possessing equal learning, ambition, and versatility of manners, with superior activity and caution. They quarrelled among themselves, and thus lost the favour and reverence of the people; and they were at last gradually sinking into insignificance, when they were swallowed up in the general wreck of monastic institutions.

The magnificence of their edifices, which excited universal envy, was the frequent topic of Wickliffe's invective; and this poet, who was apparently much attached to the opinions of that reformer, has given us the following elaborate description of a Dominican convent.

Then thought I to *frayne*[1] the first of these four
orders;
And pressed to the preachers, to proven her will:
Ich hied to her house, to hearken of more,
And when I came to that court, I gaped about,
Such a build bold y-built upon earth height,
Saw I not, in certain, sith a long time.
I *seemed*[2] upon that house, and *yern*[3] thereon looked,
How the pillars weren y-paint, and polished full
clean,
And quaintly y-carven, with curious knots,
With windows well y-wrought, wide up aloft;
And then I entered in, and even forth went.
And all was walled, that *wone*,[4] though it wide were,
With posterns, in privity to passen where hem list.
Orchards and *erberes*,[5] *evesed*[6] well clean,
And a curious cross, craftily *entailed*,[7]
With tabernacles *y-tight*[8] to *toten*[9] all abouten.
The price of a plough-land, of pennies so round,
To apparell that pillar were pure little.

[1] To ask. Sax.
[2] Gazed.
[3] Eagerly. Sax.
[4] Habitation. Sax.
[5] Arbours.
[6] Turfed? from *waisons* (*i. e.* gazons) old Fr. or is it *trimmed*, from *efesian*, tondere. Sax.?
[7] Carved. Fr.
[8] Probably for *y-dight*.
[9] Look.

Then I *mute me*[1] forth the minster to knowen,
And *awaited*[2] *woon*[3] wonderly well y-built.
With arches on every *half*,[4] and *bellich*[5] y-carven,
With crotches on corners, with knots of gold.
Vide windows y-wrought, y-written full thick,
Shining *with shapen shields*, to shewen about,
With *marks* of merchants *y-meddled*[6] between,
Mo than twenty and two, twice y-number'd.
There is none herald that hath half swich a roll.
Right as a *regeman*[7] hath reckon'd them new.
Tombs upon tabernacles, *tyled upon loft*[8]
Housed in *hornes*[9] hard set abouten
Of armed alabaster clad for the nonce,
Made upon marble in many manner wise.

[1] Mounted?

[2] Watched, observed, Fr.

[3] One? or *wone*, a habitation?

[4] Part.

[5] Beautifully. Fr.

[6] Y-meddled is *mixed*; the *marks* of merchants are put in opposition to the *shapen shields*, because merchants had no coats of arms.

[7] This word sometimes means simply an *accompt*: but it here seems to allude to the famous *Ragman's* roll, and to be put as an antithesis to the herald's roll.

[8] Raised aloft.

[9] Mr. Warton supposes that *horns* may mean *irons*, *i. e.* iron rails; or that perhaps we ought to read *hurnes*, which mean *caves* or obscure places. But why not *harnés*, *harness*, *i. e.* armour?

Knights in their *conisante*[1] clad for the nonce:
All, it seem'd, saints; y-sacred upon earth.
And lovely ladies y-wrought, layen by their sides,
In many gay garments that weren gold-beaten.
Though the tax of ten years were truly gathered,
N'old it not maken that house, half as I trow.

Then came I to that cloister, and gaped abouten,
How it was pillar'd and paint, and pourtray'd well clean,
All *heled*[2] with lead, low to the stones,
And y-paved with *poyntil*,[3] each point after other
With conduits of clean tin, closed all about
With lavers of *latten*[4] lovely *y-greithed*.[5]
I trow, the gainage of the ground in a great shire,
N'old apparell that place, *no point till other end*.[6]

Then was the chapter-house wrought as a great church,
Carven, and covered, and quaintly entailed,

[1] Cognisances, devices.
[2] Hid, covered. Sax.
[3] Probably lozenge-shaped stones; pantiles.
[4] A sort of brass. Fr.
[5] Prepared, adorned.
[6] From one end to the other.

With seemly cielure y-set on-loft,
As a parliament-house y-painted about.

Then fared I into *Fraytour*,[1] and found there another;
An hall for an high king an house-hold to holden.
With broad boards abouten, y-benched well clean;
With windows of glass wrought as a church.
Then walked I farrer, and went all abouten,
And saw halls full high, and houses full noble,
Chambers with chimneys, and chapels gay,
And kitchens for an high king in castles to holden.
And her *dortour*[2] y-dight with doors full strong
Fermerye[3] and Fraytour, with *fele*[4] mo houses.
And all strong stone wall, *stern*[5] upon height,
With gay garrets, and great, and each hole glased.
And other houses enow to harbour the Queen.
And yet these builders will beggen a bag full of wheat
Of a pure poor man, that may *unneth*[6] pay
Half his rent in a year, and half been behind.

Mr. Warton has transcribed a very large portion

[1] Fratry, or common-hall.
[2] Dormitory. Fr.
[3] Infirmary.
[4] Many. Sax.
[5] Strewn, built.
[6] Scarcely.

of this curious poem, which, as he justly observes, is nearly as rare as a manuscript; but the printed copies, like those of Pierce Ploughman's Vision, seem to be full of typographical errors; and an editor who should reprint a correct edition of these two forgotten poems, would make a valuable addition to our stock of early literature.

Langland's work, whatever may be thought of its poetical merit, cannot fail of being considered as an entertaining and useful commentary on the general histories of the fourteenth century, not only from its almost innumerable pictures of contemporary manners, but also from its connection with the particular feelings and opinions of the time. The reader will recollect, that the minds of men were greatly incensed by the glaring contradictions that appeared between the professions and actions of the two great orders of the state.

The clergy of a religion founded on humility and self-denial, united the most shameless profligacy of manners with the most inordinate magnificence. An armed aristocracy, who, by their oath of knighthood, were bound to the maintenance of order, and to the protection of the helpless and unfortunate, were not satisfied with exercising, in their own persons, the most intolerable oppression on their vassals, but were the avowed protectors of the

subordinate robbers and assassins who infested the roads, and almost annihilated the internal intercourse of every country in Europe. The people were driven to despair, flew to arms, and took a most frightful revenge on their oppressors. Various insurrections in Flanders; those of the Jacquerie in France, and those of Wat Tyler and others in England, were the immediate consequences of this despair; but the popular discontents had been in a great degree prepared and fomented by a set of itinerant preachers, who inveighed against the luxury and crimes of the great, and maintained the inalienable rights and natural equality of man.

Langland's poem, addressed to popular readers, written in simple, but energetic language, and admirably adapted, by its dramatic form, and by the employment of allegorical personages to suit the popular taste, though it is free from these extravagant doctrines, breathes only the pure spirit of the Christian religion, and inculcates the principles of rational liberty: this may possibly have prepared the minds of men, for those bolder tenets which, for a series of years, were productive only of national restlessness and misery, but which ultimately terminated in a free government, and a reformed religion.

The reader who may be desirous of seeing farther

specimens of alliterative poetry, will find in Mr. Warton's history, some extracts from a poem on Alexander, written perhaps by a contemporary of Langland; and a hymn to the Virgin, of much earlier date, neither of which are mentioned in Dr. Percy's Essay.

CHAPTER VII.

Reign of Edward III. continued.—John Gower—Specimen of his Poetry.

THE next place in our poetical history, is usually assigned to John Gower, who is supposed to have been born before Chaucer, although he survived him by two years, and died in 1402. We do not possess any materials for the history of his life, but it is probable that he was well born;* and we have

* There is a remarkable passage in Sir John Fortescue's treatise, "de Laudibus Legum Angliæ," which tends to confirm the popular opinion, that Gower, Chaucer, and Occleve, all of whom received their education at the Inns of Court, were of noble origin. It is in the 49th chapter, where, after enumerating the necessary expences incurred by the students at those seminaries, he says, "Quo fit, ut "vix doctus in legibus illis reperiatur in regno *qui non* "*sit nobilis, et* [*aut?*] *de nobilium genere egressus.* In his "verò hospitiis, ultra studium legum, est quasi gymna-"sium omnium morum qui nobiles decent. Ibi *cantare* "ipse addiscunt, similiter et se exercent in *omni genere har-*"*moniæ.* Ibi etiam *tripudiare*, ac jocos singulos nobilibus "convenientes, *qualiter in domo regiâ exercere solent*, enutriti. "Ita ut milites, barones, alii quoque magnates et nobiles "regni, in hospitiis illis ponunt filios suos," &c.

an indirect proof of his wealth as well as of his munificence, because we know that he contributed largely to rebuild, in its present elegant form, the conventual church of St. Mary Overee, in Southwark, where his very curious tomb still remains.

It is probable that Gower's earliest compositions were his French ballads, of which fifty are still preserved in a folio MS. formerly belonging to Fairfax, Cromwell's general, and now to be found in the library of the Marquis of Stafford, by whom they were communicated to Mr. Warton. These juvenile productions are more poetical and more elegant, than any of his subsequent compositions in his native language; perhaps they would not suffer by a comparison with the best contemporary sonnets written by professed French poets: at all events they shew extraordinary proficiency in a foreigner; for which reason, and because they may be useful for the purpose of comparing the state of the two languages at this period, it is hoped that the reader will forgive the insertion of the following short specimen. It is a sonnet on the month of May.

Pour comparer le joli mois de Mai,
Je (le) dirai semblable à Paradis;
Car lors chantoit et merle at pepegai:

Les champs sont verds, les herbes sont fleuries;
Lors est Nature dame du païs;
Dont Venus point l'amant à tel essai
Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.

[The second stanza, being scarcely intelligible from the mistakes of the transcriber, is omitted.]

En lieu de rose ortie cueillerai,
Dont mes chapels ferai, par tel devis,
Que toute joie et confort je lairrai,
Si celle seule en qui j'ai mon cœur mis,
Selon le point que j'ai souvent requis
Ne daigne alléger les griefs mals que j'ai,
Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.

Pour pitié querre, et pourchasser *intris*[1]
Va-t'en balade, où je t'envoyerai,
Qu'ores en certain je l'ai très bien appris
Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.

But the three principal works of our author are, the Speculum Meditantis, the Vox Clamantis, and the Confessio Amantis, which are represented by the three volumes on his tomb. The first of these is a moral tract in French verse, in which the

[1] Entrée, *i. e.* admission to the presence of his mistress.

felicities of conjugal fidelity are illustrated by examples selected from various authors. This was never printed. The *Vox Clamantis* consists of seven books of Latin elegiacs, written with some degree of purity, and a tolerable attention to the prosody: it is little more than a metrical chronicle of the insurrection of the commons, in the reign of Richard II. This also exists only in manuscript. The Confessio Amantis, which was printed by Caxton, in 1483, and afterwards by Berthelette, in 1532, and 1554, appears to have been composed at the command of Richard II. who having met our poet rowing on the Thames near London, invited him into the royal barge, and after much conversation requested him to "*book some new thing.*"

It is rather extraordinary that Mr. Warton, who repeats this anecdote, should have passed it over without a comment; because, having previously told us that Gower, "by a critical cultivation of "his native language, laboured to reform its irre-"gularities, and to establish an English style," he might naturally have been tempted to inquire, why this style was never employed till the poet was past fifty years of age. Perhaps the circumstance may be partly explained by a remark of Mr. Tyrwhitt, who observes, that Edward III. was insensible even to the poetical merits of Chaucer himself, or at

least " had no mind to encourage him in the cul-
" tivation or exercise of them." He adds, " It
" should seem that Edward, though adorned with
" many royal and heroic virtues, had not the gift
" of discerning and patronizing a great poet; a gift
" which, like that of genuine poetry, is only be-
" stowed on the chosen few by the peculiar favour
" of heaven." It is very certain that the *gift* of discerning the merits of a great English poet might have been bestowed on Edward by the peculiar favour of heaven, but it may be doubted whether he could reasonably be expected to possess it *without* such a special interposition.

It is to be remembered, that French had hitherto been the only language that was studied, though English was certainly not quite unknown at court; that Isabella, the mother of Edward, was a French woman; that he was sent to Paris at the very early age of thirteen, to assist her in her negociations with her brother the king of France; that he was married, by her means, to Philippa, a princess of Hainault; that he was only fifteen years old when he mounted the throne; and that after this period, the active scenes in which he was incessantly engaged, were not likely to allow him much leisure, for the purpose of completing his education. He began his reign, two years before the birth of

Chaucer, and could then have seen no specimens of English poetry superior to the dry chronicles of Robert of Gloucester. It may be presumed, therefore, that if he read any poetry it would be that of the French minstrels; and, that his preference of their compositions to those of his countrymen, was no great disparagement to his taste, may be inferred from the testimony of Chaucer himself, who says, in his *envoi* to the Complaint of Venus,

And eke to me it is a great *penànce*,
Sith rhyme in English hath such scarcity
To follow, word by word, the *curiosity*,
Of *Graunson, flower of them that make in France.*

What was worth the *penance* of translating, certainly deserved to be consulted in the original.

But political motives induced Edward to discourage the cultivation of French, the language of his enemies: our native poetry received considerable improvements in the course of his long reign; and his grandson, who found it in this cultivated state, and who was perhaps acquainted with Gower's poetical talents, by means of his French sonnets already mentioned, may have naturally been solicitous that he should employ them in some English composition.

To return to the Confessio Amantis. This poem

is a long dialogue between a lover and his *confessor*, who is a priest of Venus, and is called GENIUS. As every vice is in its nature unamiable, it ought to follow, that immorality is unavoidably punished by the indignation of the fair sex; and that every fortunate lover must, of necessity, be a good man, and a good Christian; and upon this presumption, which, perhaps, is not strictly warranted by experience, the confessor passes in review, all the defects of the human character, and carefully scrutinizes the heart of his penitent with respect to each, before he will consent to give him absolution.

Because example is more impressive than precept, he illustrates his injunctions by a series of apposite tales, with the morality of which our lover professes to be highly edified; and, being of a more inquisitive turn than lovers usually are, or perhaps hoping to subdue his mistress, by directing against her the whole artillery of science, he gives his confessor an opportunity of incidentally instructing him in chemistry, and in the Aristotelian philosophy. At length, all the interest that he has endeavoured to excite, by the long and minute details of his sufferings, and by manifold proofs of his patience, is rather abruptly and unexpectedly extinguished: for he tells us, not that his mistress is inflexible or faithless, but that he is arrived at such a good old

age that the submission of his fair enemy, would not have been sufficient for insuring his triumph.

Through this elaborate work, Gower appears to have distributed all the contents of his commonplace book, and Mr. Warton has traced back many of these fragments, to the obscure sources from whence they were derived. These are, besides Colonna's romantic history of Troy, and the Gesta Romanorum already mentioned, the PANTHEON, or Memoriæ Seculorum, a Latin chronicle, written partly in prose and partly in verse, by Godfrey of Viterbo, who died in 1190; the chronicle of Cassiodorus, called Chronicon Breve, written at the command of Theodoric king of the Goths; and the chronicle of Isidorus, called Hispalensis. "It is "extremely probable," says Mr. Warton, "that "the plan on which all these works are constructed, "that of deducing a perpetual history from the "creation to the writer's age, was partly taken "from Ovid's Metamorphosis, and partly from the "Bible."

For the scientific part of his work, Gower was most probably indebted to a spurious work attributed to Aristotle, called SECRETUM SECRETORUM, and to the Latin original of a treatise called "Les Dictes moraux des Philosophes, les Dictes "des Sages, et les Secrets d'Aristote," which was

afterwards translated into English by the unfortunate Anthony Widville first Earl of Rivers.

Chaucer, who knew and loved our poet, has comprised his character in a single epithet, and every reader must concur in the judgment of this great contemporary critic. While he is satisfied with being "*the moral Gower*," he always appears to advantage: he is wise, impressive, and sometimes almost sublime. The good sense and benevolence of his precepts, the solemnity with which they are enforced, and the variety of learning by which they are illustrated, make us forget that he is preaching in masquerade, and that our excellent instructor is a priest of Venus. But his narrative is often quite petrifying; and when we read in his work the tales with which we had been familiarized in the poems of Ovid, we feel a mixture of surprise and despair, at the perverse industry employed in removing every detail, on which the imagination had been accustomed to fasten. The author of the Metamorphosis was a poet, and at least sufficiently fond of ornament; Gower considers him as a mere annalist; scrupulously preserves his facts; relates them with great perspicuity; and is fully satisfied when he has extracted from them as much morality, as they can be reasonably expected to furnish.

The popularity of this writer is, perhaps, not

very likely to revive: but although few modern readers will be tempted to peruse a poem of more than thirty thousand verses, written in obsolete English, without being allured by the hopes of more entertainment than can easily be derived from the Confessio Amantis, there are parts of the work which might very probably be reprinted with advantage. Such are, the tale in folio 70, (edit. 1532,) beginning, "Of Armenie I read thus." The tale in folio 85, from which Shakspeare has probably taken his incident of the caskets in the Merchant of Venice. A fable in folio 110, beginning, "To speak of an unkind man." The story of a Faun and Hercules, folio 122, beginning, "The "mightiest of all men." That of Necabanus and Olympias, folio 137: and the beautiful romantic tale of Apollinus Prince of Tyre, folio 175 to 185. It is also to be observed, that the fourth and seventh books, containing a very good compendium of nearly all the learning of the age, may be worth consulting.

It is usual to couple the names of Gower and Chaucer, as if these contemporary poets had possessed similar talents: the fairest method, therefore, to form an estimate of both, will be to give from one, a subject which has been attempted by the other. Gower's Florent, which he appears to have

om the Gesta Romanorum, is generally
o be the original of Chaucer's Wife of
the story has considerable merit; and
wer's best manner. These reasons,
excuse the insertion of so long a
om an author, who was once extremely
ar, and whom we have been accustomed to
enerate, upon trust, as one of the fathers of English
oetry.

There was, whilom, by dayes old,
A worthy knight, as men told;
He was nephew to the emperor,
And of his court a courtier:
Wife-less he was, Florent he hight.
He was a man that *mochel*[1] *might*:[2]
Of armes he was désirous,
Chevalrous, and amorous,
And, for the fame of worlde's speech,
Strange adventures would he *seche*,[3]
He rode the marches all abou[illegible]

And fell a time, as he was ou[illegible]
Fortune (which may every thre[illegible]
To-break and knit of man's spe[illegible]

[1] Much. [2] Could do. [3] Seek.

Shope, as this knight rode in a pas,
That he by strength taken was:
And to a castle they him *lad*[1]
Where that he few friendes had.
For so it fell, *that ilke stound*[2]
That he hath, with a deadly wound,
Fighting, (with) his own hand slain
Branchus, which to the capitain
Was son and heir, whereof been wroth
The father and the mother both;
And fain they wouldé do vengeance
Upon Florent, but remembrance
That they took of his worthiness
Of knighthood, and of gentleness,
And how he stood of cousinage
To th' emperor, made them assuage,
And durst not slayen him for fear.
In great disputes on they were
Among them self, *that*[3] was best.

There was a lady, the sliest
Of all that men knew *tho:*[4]
So old, she might *unnethes*[5] go,
And was grandame to the dead:
And she, with that, began to *rede*,[6]

[1] Led. [2] At that same time. [3] What.
[4] Then. [5] Scarce. [6] Advise.

And she said she would bring him in,
That she shall him to death win,
All only of his own grant,
Through strength of very covenant;
Without blame of any wight.
Anon she sent for this knight,
And of her son she *aleyd*[1]
The death, and thus to him she said.

" Florent, howsoever thou be *to-wyte*[2]
" Of Branchus' death, men shall respite
" *As now*[3] to take awengement,
" Be so thou stand in judgement,
" Upon certain condition:
" That thou, unto a question
" Which I shall aske, shalt answere.
" And, over this, thou shalt eke swear,
" That if thou of the sooth fail,
" There shall none other thing avail,
" That thou ne shalt thy death receive.
" And, (for men shall thee not deceive)
" That thou thereof mightest been advised,
" Thou shalt have day and time assised;
" And leave safely for to wend;
" Be so that at thy dayes end

[1] Alledged.
[2] Accused.
[3] At present.

"Thou come again with thy *avise*."[1]

This knight, which worthy was, and wise,
This lady prayeth that he may *wyt*,[2]
And have it under seales writ,
What question it shoulde be,
For which he shall, in that degree,
Stand of his life in jeopardy.

With that, she feigneth company,
And saith, "Florent, on love it hongeth,
"All that to mine asking longeth:
"*What all women most desire*
"This would I ask: and in th' empire,
"Where thou hast most knowledging
"Take counsel of this asking."

Florent this thing hath undertake
The time was set, and the day take:
Under his seal he wrote his oath
In such a wise, and forth he goeth
Home to his *eme's*[3] court again:
To whom his aventure plain
He told, of that is him befall
And upon that they were all,

[1] Opinion.
[2] Know.
[3] Uncle's.

The wisest of the land, *assent !* [1]

But netheless, of one assent
They might not accorde *plat :* [2]
One said this, another that.
After the disposition
Of natural complection
To some woman it is pleasánce,
That to another is grievánce :
But such a thing, in speciál,
Which to them all in generál,
Is most pleasánt, and most desired
Above all other, and most conspired,
Such one can they not find,
By constellation, ne by kind ; [3]
And thus Florent, without cure,
Must stand upon his aventúre—
When time (was) come he took his leave,
That longer would he not *beleve* [4]
And prayeth his eme he be not wroth,
For that is a point of his oath
He saith, that no man shall him *wreak* [5]
Though afterward men hear speak

[1] Sent for. [2] Plainly.
[3] Neither by the stars, nor by the laws of *kind*, or *nature*.
[4] Remain.
[5] Revenge.

That he peradventure die.
And thus he went forth his way
Alone, as a knight adventurous,
And in his thought was curious
To *wyt* what was best to do.

And as he rode along so,
And came near there he would be,
In a forest there under a tree,
He saw where sat a creatúre,
A loathly womanish figúre,
That for to speak of flesh and bone
So foul yet never saw he none.

This knight beheld her readily,
And, as he would have passed by,
She cleped him, and bade him abide;
And he his horse's head aside
Tho[1] turned, and to her he rode,
And there he *hoved*[2] and abode,
To wyt what she would mean.

And she began him to *bemene*[3]
And said, "Florent, by thy name!
"Thou hast in hand such a game,

[1] Then.
[2] Hover'd.
[3] Bemoan.

" That, if thou be not better avised,
" Thy death shapen is, and devised,
" That all the world ne may thee save
" But if that thou my counsel have."

Florent, when he this tale heard,
Unto this old wight answer'd,
And of her counsel he her pray'd,
And she again to him thus said.
" Florent, if I for thee so shape,
" That thou through me thy death escape,
" And take worship of thy deed,
" What shall I have of my meed?"
" What thing (quoth he) that thou shalt axe."
" I bid never a better tax,
(Quoth she) " but first, ere thou be sped,
" Thou shalt me leave such a *wed*[1]
" That I will have thy truth in hand
" That thou shalt be mine husband,"
" Nay (said Florent) that may not be!"
" Ride then forth thy way!" (quoth she)
" And if thou go forth without *rede*[2]
" Thou shalt be *sickerly*[3] dead."
Florent *behight*[4] her good enow,
Of land, of rent, of park, of plough,

[1] Pledge. Sax.
[2] Counsel. Sax.
[3] Surely.
[4] Promised.

But all that counteth she at nought,

Tho fell this knight in much thought.
Now goeth he forth, now cometh again;
He wote not what is best to sayn,
And thought, as he rode to and fro,
That chuse he must one of the two;
Or for to take her to his wife,
Or else for to lose his life;
And then he cast his avantage,
That she was of so great an age,
That she may live but a while:
And thought to put her in an isle
Where that no man her should know,
Till she with death were overthrow.

And thus this young lusty knight
Unto this old loathly wight
Tho said: "If that none other chance
"May make my deliverance,
"But only thilke same speech
"Which as thou say'st thou shalt me teach,
"Have here mine hand, I shall thee wed!"
And thus his truth he layeth to wed
With that, she *frounceth*[1] up the brow—
"This covenant will I allow,"

[1] Wrinkleth.

She saith, " If any other thing
" But that thou hast of my teaching,
" Fro' death thy body may respite,
" I will thee of thy troth acquite:
" And else, by none other way.
" Now hearken me what I shall say.
" When thou art come into the place
" Where now they maken great menace,
" And upon thy coming abide—
" They will, anon, the same *tide*[1]
" Oppose thee of thine answer.
" I wot thou wilt no thing forbear,
" Of that thou weenest be thy best,
" And, if thou mightest so find rest,
" Well is: for then is there no more
" And else, this shall be my lore.

" That thou shalt say—*Upon this mold*[2]
" That, *all women liefest would*
" *Be sovereign of man's love:*
" *For, what woman is so above,*
" *She hath* (as who saith) *all her will:*
" *And else may she not fulfill*
" *What thing were her liefest have.*
" With this answer thou shalt save

[1] Time. Sax. [2] Earth.

" Thy self, and otherwise not:
" And, when thou hast thy end wrought,
" Come here again, thou shalt me find,
" And let no thing out of thy mind."

He goeth him forth with heavy cheer,
As he that *n'ot*[1] in what manére
He may this worlde's joy attain.
For if he die, he hath a pain;
And if he live, he must him bind
To such one, which of all kind
Of women is th' unseemliest.
Thus wote he not what is the best.
But, be him lief, or be him loth,
Unto the castle forth he go'th,
His full answer for to give,
Or for to die, or for to live.

Forth, with his council, came the lord,
The thing stooden of record,
He sent up for the lady soon:
And forth she came, that old *mone*,[2]
In presence of the remenant;
The strength of all the covenant
Tho was rehearsed openly,

[1] Knew not.
[2] *Monne*, a monkey. (Cotgrave's French Dictionary.)

And to Florent she bade *forthly*[1]
That he shall tellen his *wise*
As he that wote what is the price.

Florent saith all that ever he *couth*,[2]
But such word came there none to mouth,
That he for gift, or for behest
Might any wise his death arrest.
And thus he tarrieth long and late
Till this lady bade algate
That he shall for the doom final
Give his answer in speciál
Of that she hed him first opposed.

And then he hath truly supposed
That he him may of nothing *yelp*[3]
But if so be *tho*[5] words help
Which as the woman hath him taught:
Whereof he hath a hope caught
That he shall be excused so,
And told out plain his will *tho*.

And when that this matron heard
The manner how this knight answérd,

[1] Forthwith. [2] Knew.
[3] Prate. [4] Those.

She said, " Ha! treason! woe, thee be!
" That hast thus told the privity
" Which all women most desire.
" I would that thou were a-fire!"
But netheless, in such a plight
Florent of his answer is quite.
And *tho* began his sorrow new:
For he must gone, or be untrue
To her which his truth had.
But he, which all shame *dradde*[1]
Goeth forth in stead of his penance
And taketh the fortune of his chance,
As he that was with truth *effayted*.[2]

This old wight him hath awaited
In place where as he her left.

Florent his wofull head up-lift,
And saw this *vecke*[3] where that she sit,
Which was the loathest wight
That ever man cast on his eye.
Her nose *baas*,[4] her brows high,
Her eyen small, and deep-set.
Her cheeks been with tears wet

[1] Dreaded.
[2] Adorned. Old Fr.
[3] *Old woman.*
[4] Low.

And *ryvelin*[1] as an empty skin
Hanging down unto the chin.
Her lippés shrunken been for age;
There was no grace in her visage.
Her front was narrow, her locks hoar,
She looketh forth as doth a Moor.
Her neck is short, her shoulders *courb*,[2]
That might a mannis lust distourb.
Her body, great, and nothing small:
And, shortly to describe her all,
She hath no *lyth*[3] without a lack,
But like unto a wool-sack.

She proffereth her unto this knight,
And bade him, as he hath *behight*[4]
So as she hath been his warrant.
That he her held covenant,
And by the bridle she him sieseth,
But God wot how that she him pleaseth!
Of such wordés as she speaketh
Him thinketh well-nigh his heart breaketh,
For sorrow that he may not flee
But if he would untrue be.

[1] Shrivelled.
[2] Crooked.
[3] Limb.
[4] Promised.

Look how a sick man for his *heal*[1]
Taketh *baldemoyn*[2] with the *canele*,[3]
And with the myrrh taketh the *sugre*,[4]
Right upon such a manner lucre
Stands Florent, as, in this diete,
He drinketh the bitter with the sweet;
He *medleth*[5] sorrow with liking,
And liveth so (as who saith) dying.
His youth shall be cast away
Upon such one, which as the way
Is old: and loathly over all.
But, need he must that need shall.
He would, *algate*[6] his truth hold,
As every knight thereto is hold,
What hap soever him is befall.
Though she be foulest of all,
Yet, to honour of woman-hed,
Him thought he should taken heed:
So that, for pure gentleness,
As he her couth best address,
In rags, as she was to-tore,
He set her on his horse to-fore,

[1] Cure.

[2] Perhaps a mistake of the copyist for *bolearmene*, *i. e.* Armenian bole, once thought a specific against poison, *&c.*

[3] Cinnamon. [4] Sugar.

[5] Mixeth. [6] Always.

And forth he taketh his way soft.

No wonder if he sigheth oft!
But, as an owl flieth by night
Out of all other birdes' sight,
Right so this knight, on days broad,
In close him held; and shope his road
On nighte's time, (till the *tide*[1]
That he come there he would abide)
And privily, without noise,
He bringeth this foul great *coyse*[2]
To his castle, in such a wise
That no man might her shape avise,
Till she into the chamber came,
Where he his privy council *name*,[3]
Of such men as he most trust;
And told them, that he needs must
This beast wed to his wife,
Or else had he lost his life.

The privy women were a-sent,
That shoulden be of his assent:
Her rags they anon off draw,
And, as it was that time law,

[1] Time. [2] Probably *incumbrance*, from *coisser*, incommoder. Old Fr. See La Combe's Dict.
[3] Took; *nim*. Sax. "Nim a purse," Shakspeare.

She had bath, she had rest,
And was arrayed to the best.
But with no craft of combs broad
They might her hoar locks *shode*,[1]
And she ne would not be *shore*[2]
For no counsél: and they therefore,
With such a *tire*[3] as tho was used,
Ordainen that it was excused;
And had so craftily about
That no man might seen them out.

But when she was fully array'd,
And her attire was all assay'd,
Tho was she fouler unto see!
But yet it may none other be:
They were wedded in the night,
So woe-begone was never knight
As he was then of marriage!
And she began to play and rage,
As who saith I am well enough.
(But he thereof nothing ne *lough*[4])
For she took then cheer on hand
And *clepeth*[5] him her husbánd,
And saith, "My Lord, go we to bed!
"For I to that intent thee wed,

[1] Shed, *i. e.* separate, disentangle.
[2] Shorn.
[3] Attire.
[4] Laughed.
[5] Calleth. Sax.

"That thou shalt be my world's bliss;"
And proffereth him with that to kiss,
As she a lusty lady were,
His body might well be there;
But as of thought, and of memory,
His heart was in purgatory.

But yet, for strength of matrimony,
He might make none *essonie*[1]
That he ne might algates *plie*[2]
To go to bed of company.
And when they were a-bed naked,
Without sleep he was and waked;
He turneth on that other side,
For that he would his eyen hide
Fro looking of that foul wight.
The chamber was all full of light;
The curtains were of *sendall*[3] thin:
This new bride which lay within,
Though it be nought with his accord,
In arms she beclipt her lord,
And pray'd, as he was turned fro,
That he would turn again-ward tho.
For "now," she saith, "we be both one;"
But he lay still as any stone;

[1] Excuse. Fr. [2] Yield. Fr.
[3] Silk.

And ever anon she spake and pray'd,
And bade him think on that he said
When that he took her by the hond.

He heard, and understood the bond,
How he was set to his penánce:
And, as it were a man in trance,
He turneth him all suddenly,
And saw a lady lie him by
Of eighteen winters age,[1]
Which was the fairest of viságe
That ever in this world he *sigh*;[2]
And as he would have take her nigh,
She put her hand, and by his *leve*[3]
Besought him that he would leave,
And sayeth, for to win or *lese*[4]
He must one of two things *chese*[5]
Where[6] he will have her such o'night,
Or else upon daye's light,
For he shall not have both two.

And he began to sorrow tho,
In many a wise, and cast his thought,
But for all that, yet could he nought

[1] The Saxons always computed time by winters and nights. [2] Saw. [3] Love.
[4] Lose. [5] Choose. [6] Whether.

Devise himself which was the best.
And she, that would his heart rest,
Prayeth that he would chuse algate:
Till at the last, long and late
He said, "O ye, my life's *hele*,[1]
"Say what ye list in my *quarrél*,[2]
"I n'ot what answer I shall give,
"But ever, while that I may live,
"I will, that ye be my mistréss,
"For I cannot my self guess
"Which is the best unto my choice.
"Thus grant I you mine whole voice:
"Chuse for us both, I you pray!
"And, what as ever that ye say,
"Right as ye will, so will I."

"My lord," she said, "*grand-merci!*[3]
"For of this word that ye now sayn,
"That ye have made me sovereign,
"My destiny is over passed;
"That never hereafter shall be *lassed*[4]
"My beauty, which that I now have,
"Till I betake into my grave.
"Both night and day, as I am now,
"I shall be alway such to you.

[1] Medicine.
[2] Dispute.
[3] Many thanks.
[4] Lessened.

" The kinges daughter of Sicile
" I am, and *fell*[1] but sith a while,
" As I was with my father late,
" That my step-mother, for a hate
" Which toward me she hath begun,
" *For-shope*[2] me, till I had won
" The love, and the sovereignty,
" Of what knight that in his degree
" All other passeth of good name:
" And, as men sayn, ye be the same,
" The deed proveth it is so.
" Thus am I yours for evermo."

Tho was pleasance and joy enough;
Each one with other play'd and *lough*;[3]
They lived long, and well they fared,
And clerkés, that this chance heard,
They written it in evidence,
To teach, how that obedience
May well fortune a man to love,
And set him in his lust above.

[1] It befell. [2] Mis-shaped. [3] Laughed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Reign of Edward III. continued.—Geoffrey Chaucer.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER has had many biographers; but the authentic documents respecting his life are so few, that his last editor, Mr. Tyrwhitt, to whom this great poet will be principally indebted for the rational admiration of posterity, has contented himself with a bare recital of the following genuine anecdotes, instead of attempting to work them into a connected narrative, in which much must have been supplied by mere conjecture, or by a forced interpretation of the allusions, scattered through the works of the poet.

The original inscription on his tombstone is said to have proved that he died in 1400, aged 72, so that he was born in 1328; and he has himself told us that his birth-place was London. Of his family we know absolutely nothing. From a passage in his Court of Love, where he calls himself "Philo-"genet of Cambridge, clerk," it may be inferred, that he was educated in that university; and it is presumed that he was afterwards entered at the

Inner Temple, because the records of that court are said to state, that he was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet-street.

By what means, or at what period, he first recommended himself to his patron, John of Gaunt, whose persevering kindness seems to have accompanied him through life, is not known; but the mysterious descriptions in his "Dream," are considered as evidence that he enjoyed the confidence and familiarity of that prince during his courtship of Blanche, the heiress of the house of Lancaster, whom he married in 1359; and it was probably to their recommendation, that our poet owed his introduction into the royal household, in which we find him established in the year 1367.

In this year (the 41st of Edward III.) a patent occurs by which the king grants to Chaucer an annuity of twenty marks, by the title of *Valettus noster;* an office which, by whatever name we translate it, might be held even by persons of the highest rank, because the only science then in request among the nobility, was that of etiquette, the knowledge of which was acquired, together with the habits of chivalry, by passing in gradation through the several menial offices about the court. Chaucer was at this time thirty-nine years of age, and did not acquire the rank of *scutifer*, or esquire, till five years

afterwards. By this new title he was appointed, with two others, King's envoy to Genoa, and it was perhaps on this occasion that he made acquaintance with Petrarch, whom he professes to have seen at Padua.

The object of this mission is not mentioned, but it may be supposed to have related to some pecuniary or commercial negotiation; and it may be farther presumed, that Chaucer acquitted himself much to the king's satisfaction, because, from this time, we find him distinguished by repeated marks of royal favour. In 1374, he obtained a grant for life, of a pitcher of wine daily; and was appointed to the office of comptroller of the customs of wool, &c. in the port of London. In the next year the king granted him the wardship of Sir Edmond Staplegate's heir, for which he received £104.; and the year following, some forfeited wool to the value of £71. 4*s*. 6*d*: and in the last year of this reign he was sent to France, with Sir Guichard D'Angle, and Richard Stan or Sturry, to treat of a marriage between Richard, then prince of Wales, and a daughter of the French king.

Chaucer frequently alludes to a period of his life, at which he was possessed of considerable opulence, and it will appear, by a review of the several grants just mentioned, that he had great reason to be

in 1397 a grant of a new pension of 20 marks, we find him obliged to accept, in 1398, a protection for two years, a proof that he had by no means recovered his former affluence. In the last year of this reign, he obtained a new annual grant of a pipe of wine, and the revolution in favour of Henry IV. the son of his constant benefactor, would probably have raised him to greater affluence than he had ever enjoyed, but he died in the next year, after having received a confirmation of the last favours bestowed on him by Richard II. and a farther grant of an annuity of 40 marks.

After reading, in the circumstantial accounts of Chaucer's biographers, that he was married in 1360 to Philippa Rouet, by whom he had issue Thomas Chaucer and other children, we are surprised to learn that it is doubtful whether Thomas Chaucer was his son; that the earliest known evidence of his marriage, is a record of 1381, in which he receives a half-year's annuity of 10 marks, granted by Edward III. to his wife, as one of the maids of honour *(domicellæ)*, lately in the service of Queen Philippa; that the name of Philippa Rouet does not occur in the list of these maids of honour, but that Chaucer's wife may possibly have been Philippa Pykard; that, notwithstanding this, his said wife was certainly sister to Catherine Rouet,

who married a Sir John Swynford, and was the favourite mistress, and ultimately the wife, of the Duke of Lancaster; and that Chaucer himself mentions no son but Lewis, whom he states to have been born in 1381, a date which seems to agree with the record above mentioned, and to place the date of his marriage in 1380. The task of unravelling these obscurities must be left to future biographers.

As our principal concern is with the literary character of this poet, it would be unpardonable to omit the following estimate of his writings, extracted from Dr. Johnson's introduction to his Dictionary.

" He may, perhaps, with great justice, be styled " the first of our versifiers who wrote poetically. " He does not, however, appear to have deserved " all the praise which he has received, or all the " censure that he has suffered. Dryden, who " mistakes genius for learning, and, in confidence " of his abilities, ventured to write of what he had " not examined, ascribes to Chaucer the first refine- " ment of our numbers, the first production of easy " and natural rhymes, and the improvement of " our language, by words borrowed from the more " polished languages of the continent. Skinner, " contrarily, blames him in harsh terms for having

Flower and the Leaf, which Dryden despaired of improving.

With respect to Chaucer's language, it is impossible not to feel some disappointment at the cautious and doubtful opinion, delivered by the author of our national dictionary, and delivered in an introduction to that truly noble monument of his genius. That Chaucer "*might probably make some innovations*," and that "his diction was *in general* like "that of his contemporaries," we should have conjectured without Dr. Johnson's assistance; because a writer of genius and learning will be likely to make some innovations in a barbarous language, but in so doing, will not choose to become quite unintelligible. From a critick so intimately acquainted with the mechanism of language, we should have expected to learn, whether Chaucer had in any degree added to the precision of our English idiom, by improvements of its syntax, or to its harmony, by the introduction of more sonorous words; or whether he was solely indebted, for the beauty and perspicuity of his style, to that happy selection of appropriate expressions, which distinguishes every writer of original thinking and real genius.

All Chaucer's immediate successors, those who studied him as their model, Occleve, Lydgate, King James I. &c. speak with rapture of the

elegance and splendor of his diction. He is "the "flower of eloquence"—"superlative in elo- "quence;" his words are "the gold dew-drops of "speech." Such exaggerated praises certainly imply an enthusiastic, though perhaps absurd, admiration; and as these poets would probably attempt to imitate, what they considered as eminently beautiful, it seems likely, that an examination of their style, must enable us to discover what they considered, as the improvements introduced by Chaucer.

Now the characteristics of our poetry, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are, an exuberance of ornament, and an affectation of Latinity, neither of which peculiarities are to be found in Robert of Gloucester, Robert de Brunne, Laurence Minot, Langland, or indeed in any of the poets anterior to Chaucer. This, therefore, may be supposed to be what Chaucer himself, and his successors, meant by what they called an *ornate style*, of which the following stanza, extracted from the "Court of Love," is a curious specimen.

Honour to thee, celestial and clear,
Goddess of Love, and *to thy celsitude*,
That givest us light so far down from thy sphere,
Piercing our heartis *with thy pulchritude;*

Comparison none of similitude
May to thy grace be made in no degree,
That hast us set with love in unity.

It is not meant that this is an example of Chaucer's usual style; indeed no poet is, in general, more free from pedantry: but the attentive reader will find that in the use of words of Latin derivation, most of which are common to the French and Italian languages, he very generally prefers the inflections of the latter, either as thinking them more sonorous, or because they are nearer to the original; and that in his descriptive poetry he is very fond of multiplying his epithets, and of copying all the other peculiarities of the Italian poetry, (from which his favourite metre is unquestionably derived) with the view of "refining our numbers, and "improving our language, by words borrowed from "the more polished languages of the Continent."

With respect to his success in these endeavours, there has been a considerable difference of opinion; but he has been most admired by those, who were best qualified to appreciate his merit. Spenser, his warmest panegyrist, had studied him with very minute and particular attention; and though many readers will not concur with him in thinking, that Chaucer's compositions are "the

" well of English undefiled," they will admit that Spenser formed his judgment with due deliberation, and that he evinced the sincerity of his belief, by trusting the success of his own poetical reputation, to the same antiquated phraseology.

From a general review of all Chaucer's works, it will appear, that he entertained a very mean opinion of his native language, and of the poets who had employed it; and that he was, during a great part of his life, incessantly occupied in translating the works of the French, Italian, and Latin poets. His " Romant of the Rose" is a professed translation from William de Lorris and Jean de Meun: the long and beautiful Romance of Troilus and Creseide, is principally imitated from Boccace's Philostrato: the " Legend of Good Women" is a free translation from Ovid's Epistles, combined with histories of his heroines, derived from various Latin chronicles: " the House of Fame" is a similar compilation: " Palamon and Arcite" is known to be an imitation of the Theseide of Boccace. On the whole it may be doubted, whether he thought himself sufficiently qualified to undertake an original composition till he was sixty years of age, at which time it is conjectured that he formed, and began to execute, the plan of his Canterbury Tales.

This elaborate work was apparently intended to

contain a delineation of all the prominent characters in society; these were to be sketched out in an introductory prologue; to be contrasted by characteristic dialogues, and probably to be engaged in incidents which should farther develope their peculiarities of disposition: and as stories were absolutely necessary in every popular work, an appropriate tale was to be assigned to each of the pilgrims. It is not extraordinary, that the remainder of Chaucer's life, should have been insufficient for the completion of such a plan. What is actually executed can only be considered as a fragment; but, imperfect as it is, it contains more information respecting the manners and customs of the fourteenth century, than could be gleaned from the whole mass of contemporary writers, English or Foreign; and the poetical beauties with which it abounds have insured to its author, the first rank among the English poets, anterior to Shakspeare.

As it would be absurd, to crowd the present short sketch, with formal extracts from a work so generally known and admired, the following specimens will be principally taken from Chaucer's less popular compositions, and will be selected with an attention to other objects, than that of exhibiting proofs of his poetical excellence.

Addison has observed, that " a reader seldom

"peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows "whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, "of a mild or choleric disposition, married, or a "bachelor, with other particulars of the like "nature, that conduce very much to the right "understanding of an author." Montaigne was certainly of the same opinion; and Chaucer, though he has told us nothing of his birth, has taken care to inform us that he was corpulent, and had a habit of looking on the ground, the result of frequent meditation.

——— our host to japen he began,
And then at erst he looked upon me,
And saide thus: What man art thou? quod he:
Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare!
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approche near, and look up merrily!
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waist is shapen as well as I.
This were a puppet in an arm to embrace,
For any woman, small and fair of face!
He seemeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance, &c.

His love of reading is mentioned repeatedly; but the following passages are perhaps the most remarkable for the quaint simplicity of the style.

Of usage, what for *lust*,[1] and what for *lore*,[2]
On bookis read I oft, as I you told;
But, wherefore that I speak all this, not *yore*[3]
Agone, it happened me for to behold
Upon a book ywrit with letters old,
And thereupon a certain thing to learn,
The longe day full fast I read, and *yern*.[4]

For out of the old fieldis, as men saith,
Cometh all this new corn from year to year;
And out of olde bookis, in good faith,
Cometh all this new science that men *lere*:[5]
But now to purpose: as of this matere
To reden forth, it gan me so delight,
That all that day methought it but a *lite*,[6] &c.

[*Assemb. of Fowls.*

Again, in the "Legend of Good Women."—

And as for me, though that I *can*[7] but lite,
On bookis for to read, I me delight,
And to them give I faith and full credénce,
And in mine heart have them in reverence
So heartily, that there is game none
That from my bookis maketh me to goen,

[1] Pleasure. [2] Learning. [3] Far, long. [4] Eagerly.
[5] Learn. [6] Little. [7] Ken, know.

But it be seldom, on the holy day;
Save certainly when that the month of May
Is comen, and I hear the fowlis sing;
And that the floweris 'ginnen for to spring,
Farewell my book and my devotion, &c.

To his frequent morning walks we are indebted for the many beautiful specimens of descriptive poetry, with which his works abound: as, for instance, in the "Complaint of the Black Knight."—

I rose anon, and thought I woulde goen
Into the wood, to hear the birdis sing,
When that the misty vapour was agone,
And clear and faire was the morrowing;
The dew also, like silver in shining,
Upon the leaves, as any baume sweet;
Till fiery Titan with his percant heat

Had dried up the lusty liquor new,
Upon the herbis in the greene mead;
And that the flowers, of many diverse hue,
Upon their stalkis *gonin*[1] for to spread,
And for to 'splay out their leavis *in brede*[2]
Again the sun, *gold-burned*[3] in his sphere,
That down to them y-cast his beamis clear.

[1] Began. [2] Abroad. [3] Gold-burnished.

And by a river forth I gan *costay*[1]
Of water clear as beryl or chrystal,
Till, at the last, I found a little way
Toward a park, enclosed with a wall
In compass round, and by a gate small,
Whoso that would, he freely mighten gon
Into this park, y-walled with green stone.

And in I went to hear the birdis' song,
Which on the branches, both in plain and vale,
So loud y-sang, that all the wood y-rong,
Like as it should shiver in pieces smale;
And as me thoughten that the nightingale
With so great might her voice began out-wrest
Right as her heart for love would all to-brest.

The soil was plain and smooth, and wonder soft,
All over-spread with tapets that nature
Had made herself; covered eke aloft
With boughis green, the flowers for to cure,
That in their beauty they may long endure,
From all assault of Phœbus' fervent *fere*,[2]
Which in his sphere so hot y-shone and clear.

The air attempré, and the smoothe wind
Of Zephyrus among the blossoms white,

[1] Costeyer, coteyer. Fr.; to *coast*. [2] Fire.

So wholesome was, and nourishing *by kind*,[1]
That smalle buddis, and round blossoms lite,
In manner gan of her breath to delight,
To give us hope that there fruit shall y-take
Against autumn, ready for to shake.—

There saw I growing eke the fresh haw-thorn
In white motléy, that so sweet doth y-amell;
Ash, fir, and oak, with many a young acorn,
And many a tree mo than I (now) can tell:
And, me before, I saw a little well
That had his course as I could well behold,
Under a hill, with quick streamis and cold.

The gravel, gold: the water pure as glass:
The bankis round the well environing,
And soft as velvet was the younge grass
That thereupon hastily came springing.
The suit of trees, abouten compassing,
Their shadow cast closing the well around,
And all the herbis growing on the ground, &c.

Chaucer has also taken care to tell us that he was magnificently lodged.—

And sooth to sayen, my chamber was
Full well depainted, and with *glass*

[1] In its nature.

Were all the windows well y-glased
Full clear, and not a hole y-crazed,
That to behold it was great joy:
For wholly all the story of TROY[1]
Was in the glazing y-wrought thus
Of Hector and king Priamus;
Achilles, and king Laomedon,
And eke Medea and Jason;
Of Paris, Helen, and Lavine.
And all the walls with colours fine
Were painted, bothe text and glose,
And all the Romant of the Rose, &c.

He mentions another room which was curiously painted—

——————— on the walls old portraiture
Of horsemen, hawkis, and houndis,
And hurt deer, all full of woundis,
Some like bitten, some hurt with shot, &c.

A modern reader may possibly not be aware that glass windows were so rare in the reign of Edward III. as to merit a particular description; but it appears

[1] The Painted Chamber, adjoining the House of Lords, represents the siege of Troy; and the tapestry was placed there at the marriage of Richard II.

from Heywood's "Spider and Flie," that glazed windows were considered as a luxury in the time of Henry VIII. Heywood's window was only latticed. The Trojan war was indeed of little use, except as a provocative to dreaming, which Chaucer perhaps did not much want; but though an unnecessary, it must have been an expensive ornament.

In the Legend of Cleopatra, we are surprised by the following description of the battle of Actium. The fleets having met—

Up goeth the trump, and for to shout, and *shete*,[1]
And painen them to set on with the sun,
With grisly sound out goeth the GREAT GUN:
And heartily they hurtlen all at once;
And from the top down cometh the great stones.
In goeth the *grapinel*,[2] so full of crooks,
Among the ropis run the sheering hooks;
In with the pole-ax presseth *he*[3] and *he*;
Behind the mast beginneth *he* to flee;
He rent the sail with hookis like a scythe;
He bringeth the cup, and biddeth them be blith;
He poureth *pesen*[4] upon the hatches' slider,
With pottis full of lime they gone together;
And thus the longe day in fight they spend, &c.

[1] Shoot.
[2] Grappling-iron. Fr.
[3] This.
[4] Poix, Fr. Pitch.

In the Legend of Dido, the situation of Æneas at her court, is thus curiously described:

This Æneas is come to Paradise,
Out of the swallow of hell: and thus in joy
Remembereth him of his estate in Troy,
To dancing chambers, full of *paraments*,[1]
Of riche beddis, and of ornamentis,
This Æneas is led after the meat.
And with the queen when that he had y-set,
And spices parted, and the wine agone,
Unto his chamber was he led anon
To take his ease, and for to have his rest,
With all his folk, to doen whatso them list.

There ne was courser well y-bridled none,
Ne steede for the justing well to gone;
Ne large palfrey, easy for the nonce,
Ne jewel y-set full of riche stones,
Ne sackis full of gold of large weight,
Ne ruby none that shineth bright by night;
Ne *gentil hautein* falcon *heronere*,[2]
Ne hound for hart, or wilde boar, or deer;
Ne cup of gold with florins new *y-bet*[3]
That in the house of Libya may been get,

[1] Parement, Fr.; from *parer*, to adorn.
[2] Gentil, hautain, heronier. Fr.
[3] Beaten, stamped, coined.

That Dido ne hath Æneas it y-sent:
AND ALL IS PAYED, WHAT THAT HE HATH SPENT;
Thus can this worthy queen her guestis call
As she that can in freedom passen all, &c.

In the romance of Troilus and Cressida, Chaucer says—

And after this the story telleth us,
That she unto him gave the fair bay steed
The which she *onis*[1] won of Troilus
And eke a *broche*[2] (and that was little need)
That Troilus' was, she gave to Diomede:
And eke the bet' from sorrow him to relieve,
She made him wear *a pencell*[3] *of her sleeve*, &c.

The attributes of chivalry, and the fashions and customs of the middle ages, do not, perhaps, sit very gracefully on classical characters; but we are glad to find them any where.

The following description of the entry of Troilus into Troy, is inserted, because it seems to have suggested to Mr. Gray some very beautiful lines in his Latin Epistle from Sophonisba to Massinissa,

[1] Once. [2] A clasp, or buckle; any jewel. Fr.
[3] A small streamer; pennoncel. Fr.

"Jam flexi regale decus," &c. (Letter to Mr. West, May 27, 1742.)

This Troilus sat on his baie steed
All armed, save his head, full richely,
And wounded was his horse, and gan to bleed,
On which he rode a pace full softily:
But such a knightly sight, lo! truily
As was on him, was not withouten fail
To look on Mars that god is of battaile.

So like a man of armis, and a knight,
He was to seen, fulfill'd of high prowéss,
For both he had a body, and a might
To doen that thing, as well as hardiness;
And eke to see him in that geer y-dress,
So fresh, so young, so wieldy seemed he,
It was an heaven on him for to see.

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissue hung, his back behind,
His shield to-dashed with swordis and with maces,
In whiche men might many an arrow find,
That *thirled*[1] had both horn, and nerve, and rind;
And aye the people cried "Here cometh our joy,
"And, next his brother, holder up of Troy.

[1] *Pierced through*, Sax.; hence our *thrill*, and *drill*.

For which he waxed a little red for shame,
When he so heard the people on him crien,
That to behold it was a noble game
How soberly he cast adown his eyen.
Cressid anon gan all his cheer espien,
And let it in her heart so softily sink, &c.—

The Romaunt of the Rose furnishes a great variety of beautiful descriptions; but they have been frequently quoted, and are probably familiar to the reader, who will perhaps be better pleased with the following lines, containing advice on dress, and directed to the fine gentlemen of the fourteenth century.

And look alway that they be shape
(What garment that thou shalt thee make)
Of him that can the best y-do;
With all that pertaineth thereto.
Pointes and sleeves be well sittand,
Full right and streight upon the hand.
Of shoen and bootis, new and fair,
Look, at the least, thou have a pair;
And that they fit so *feteously*,[1]
That these rude men may utterly

[1] Neatly; "foot it *featly*." Shakspeare.

Mervail, sith that they sit so plain,
How they come on or off again.
Wear streighte glovis, with *aumere*[1]
Of silk; and alway with good cheer
Thou give if that thou have richesse—
Have hat of floweris fresh as May;
Chaplet of roses on Whitsunday;
For such array costeth but lite.[2]
Thine handis wash, thy teeth make white,
And let no filth upon thee be.
Thy nailis black if thou may see,
Void it away *deliverly*,[3]
And *kembe*[4] thine head right jolily.
FARCE NOT THY VISAGE IN NO WISE;[5]
For that of love is not th' emprise;
For love doth haten, as I find,
A beauty that cometh not of kind, &c.

[1] *Aumoniere*, purse. [2] Little.
[3] Quickly. [4] Comb.
[5] This seems to imply that even the gentlemen of Chaucer's time were addicted to painting.

CHAPTER IX.

Same Period continued.—John Barber.—Remarks on the Language of Scotland at this Period.—Sketch of the BRUCE—*Extracts from that Poem.*

AT the same time with Chaucer, flourished John Barber, archdeacon of Aberdeen. We learn from Wyntown's Chronicle, that he was author of a considerable historical work, which has not descended to posterity, called the *Brute*, comprizing the whole genealogy of the kings of Scotland, probably compiled from Geoffrey of Monmouth, or translated from Wace. But he is only known to us by his biographical poem called the *Bruce*, containing a history of the life and reign of Robert I. It is divided, by its editor, into twenty books, and consists of about 14000 eight-syllable verses.

It has been already mentioned in the account of Robert de Brunne, that the "Thomas" whom he cites with so much praise, as author of the Gest of Sir Tristram, is conjectured by Mr. Tyrwhitt to be Thomas of Ercildoun; so that our ancestors appear

to have been indebted to a Scotch poet, for the earliest model of a pure English style. But be this as it may, the very interesting poem now before us, the phraseology of which does not differ in any material point from that of Chaucer and his contemporaries, is a sufficient evidence that, in our attempts to trace the history, and mark the gradations of our language, we have been much too inattentive to the progress of that language amongst our northern neighbours.

The learned and ingenious editor of "the Poetical "Remains of James the First," has endeavoured to account for the identity of speech in the two countries, by a reference to historical documents. He observes, that Malcolm III. after the murder of his father Duncan, was rescued from the hands of Macbeth, and carried into England, to the court of Edward the Confessor, where he received his education; and was afterwards replaced on the throne of Scotland, by means of an English army commanded by Seward, earl of Northumberland. Before this time, the residence of the kings of Scotland had been in the northern parts of the island; but Malcolm, soon after his restoration, removed his court to Dumferline, on the north of the Forth; either with the view of being nearer to a country for which he had contracted a partiality,

or perhaps for the purpose of securing himself, by the vicinity of his own subjects in Cumberland, against any attempts that might be made against him, by the partizans of Macbeth in the north. Long after this, Edgar Atheling, together with his mother and sister, and a number of their adherents, having been driven by a storm into the mouth of the Forth, were received with great kindness by Malcolm, who ultimately espoused the princess Margaret, and distributed grants of land amongst the Anglo-Saxon nobles who had accompanied her.

From these premises Mr. Tytler infers, that Malcolm was the first cause of introducing into Scotland the Anglo-Saxon language, which he supposes to have been disseminated over the Lowlands, partly by means of these followers of Edgar Atheling, and partly by means of the intercourse which prevailed, between the inhabitants of Scotland, and those of the four northern counties of England,—Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham, which were held by the kings of Scotland, as fiefs of the crown of England.

This conjecture, however, does not seem to be perfectly satisfactory; nor are the causes in themselves sufficient, to have wholly changed the language of a country. If, at the present moment, the Celtic language prevailed over the whole of

Scotland, instead of being confined to the Highlands, such a testimony would compel us to admit, either that the Saxons and Danes had been prevented by some unaccountable cause, from attempting to form a settlement on the northern shores of this island; or that their attempts had been rendered abortive by the superior bravery and skill of the inhabitants. But, as the same Teutonic dialects are found to form the basis of the language, both in England and in the Lowlands of Scotland, Mr. Hume has been induced, and apparently with great reason, to infer, from this similarity of speech, a similar series of successful invasions; although this success is not recorded by the historians of Scotland.

If this conclusion be admitted, it is evidently unnecessary to refer us to the much later period of Malcolm's reign; or to seek in his marriage with an English princess, in his distribution of lands among her followers, or in the policy which induced him to change his place of residence, for the establishment of a language, which the Saxons and Danes could not fail of bringing with them; and which, if it had not been thus introduced, the inhabitants of the plains, would probably have rejected as obstinately as those of the mountains. But the principal difficulty is, to account for the introduction into Scotland, not of the Anglo-Saxon, or

Danish, but of the English language; of that compound in which, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has justly observed, though the scheme and formation were in a great measure Saxon, a large proportion of the elements, was French. In the dissemination of this, the followers of Edgar Atheling were not likely to be instrumental, because, even if it had been already formed in England, instead of being the result of their expulsion, they could not have wished to introduce, into the country which afforded them an asylum, a language which they must have considered as a badge of slavery. The phraseology of Barber, of Wyntown, and of James I. though certainly marked by many peculiarities of dialect, is not less Norman than that of their respective English contemporaries, Chaucer, Occleve, and Lydgate. In this case, neither the French schools, nor the French laws, nor any part of the tyrannical policy attributed to William the Conqueror, can have had any influence, because Scotland was never reduced under the Norman dominion.

As the influx of French words, did not begin to produce a sensible change in the language of the English, till the beginning, or perhaps the middle, of the thirteenth century, its importation from thence into Scotland, ought to be capable of being distinctly

proved. We might expect too, that as the successive improvements of the common language, would pass by slow gradations from the original, into the provincial idiom, the compositions of our native bards, would be clearly distinguished by superiority of elegance, and that Barber and Wyntown would, like their successors, avow their obligations to their English models. This, however, is not the case. Wyntown has preserved a short elegiac sonnet on the death of Alexander III. (A. D. 1285) composed, as it should seem, by a contemporary bard, and far superior to any English song of that early date. It is as follows:

When Alexander our king was dead,
That Scotland led in love and *lee*,[1]
Away was *sons*[2] of ale and bread,
Of wine and wax, of game and glee:
Our gold was changed into lead.
Christ! born into virginité,

[1] Lie, liesse; joyous, joy. Old Fr.

[2] Cens. Fr. The gloss. of the Bann. Poems translates it *hospitality*: *cens* usually means *census*, *tribute*; in some provinces it means a farm, or small domain; here it seems to mean *abundance*, or perhaps *produce*.

Succour Scotland and reméde,
That *stad*[1] is in perplexité.

Neither Barber nor Wyntown make mention of Chaucer, or of any anterior English writer, though both are full of references to French authors, whom they seem to consider as perfectly familiar to their readers; and Barber expressly terms his poem a *Romance*, a proof that it was written on a French model.

Upon the whole, unless we suppose Scotland to have remained perfectly stationary, during the progress of all their neighbours, in civilization, it is scarcely probable, even if the intercourse with England had never existed, that they could have persevered in retaining, without any change, the very corrupted Anglo-Saxon dialect of the eleventh century, and which, from that very imperfection, was so susceptible of every necessary addition. If they proceeded to enrich it with new terms, it was natural that they, like the English, should borrow these from the Norman romance, the most widely diffused and most cultivated language, excepting the Italian, of civilized Europe. It is also evident, that as the French and Scotch were very early united by interest and alliances, the progress

[1] Placed. The noun (stead) still remains in English.

of the new language would neither be retarded by that jealousy, which the native English entertained of their conquerors, nor would it be checked by a struggle with the Norman, which was spoken at the courts of the English monarchs and of their nobles; whereas the dialect of the Scottish kings was the same with that of their subjects.

This at least may be inferred, from the manner in which Wyntown notices the custom of Edward I. of addressing his hearers in French, and from the care with which he records his original words, and afterwards translates them for the benefit of his readers.

When Sir Anton the Bek had done
His speak, the King him answered soon
All intill Frankish, as used he,
" Par le sang Dieu, vous avez chanté.
" By Goddis blood," he said, ye sang:
" So shall not all our gaming gang."
[Vol. II. p. 46. See also pages 76, 83, and 87, for similar instances.]

Would it be very absurd to suppose, that our common language was separately formed in the two countries, and that it has owed its identity to its being constructed of similar materials, by similar gradations, and by nations in the same state of

society? if this opinion should be thought very improbable, must we not at least admit, that the migration of our language from England into Scotland, has not yet been fully established, and that much remains for the investigation of future antiquaries?

To return to Barber. "He seems to have been "born (says Mr. Pinkerton) in 1326. In 1357 "it appears, from a pass-port published by Rymer, "dated the 13th of August in that year, that he "was then archdeacon of Aberdeen. This pass-"port permits him to go to Oxford; there to "place three scholars to pursue their studies and "scholastic exercises. By a deed, dated the 13th "of September in the same year, also published "by Rymer, we find our author appointed by the "bishop of Aberdeen, one of his commissioners, "to meet at Edinburgh concerning the ransome of "David II. king of Scotland, then a prisoner in "England. In 1365, Rymer gives us the title of "another pass-port for John Barber, archdeacon "of Aberdeen, to go through England, with six "knights in company, to St. Denis, near Paris. "All we find further evidenced relating to our "author is, that he died aged, in the year 1396, "as we learn from the chartulary of Aberdeen."

Barber is to be considered in the double cha-

racter of historian and poet. In the first, his authority is quoted by writers who immediately succeeded him, as the most authentic that can be adduced; and Wyntown, in his "Original Chronicle," either professedly transcribes, or refers to him, for the whole history of Bruce's reign. But the attentive reader will probably think the authenticity of his narrative, better established by its own internal evidence, than it can be by such external testimony. The series of events is not only related with as much attention to chronology, as was compatible with any degree of connection or interest, but is strictly conformable to the known opinions and manners of the time, and clearly illustrates the principles of policy by which Edward I. endeavoured to keep possession of Scotland; and of the system of tactics adopted by Bruce, for the purpose of weakening in detail, a power which he was unable to combat, when united.

It is well known that the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, though warlike nations, were very little versed in the art of constructing or attacking fortified places. William the Conqueror, therefore, had filled England with castles, which rendered the position of his forces impregnable; and Edward I. having over-run the whole low country of Scotland, adopted the same expedient, and appeared

to be equally secure in his usurpation. Here the poem commences, and Barber, contemplating the enslaved condition of his country, breaks out into the following animated lines on the blessings of liberty.

Ah! freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom makes man to have likíng;
Freedom all solace to man gives:
He lives at ease, that freely lives!
A noble heart may have none ease,
Na ellys[1] nought that may him please,
If freedom fail: for free likíng
Is *yearned*[2] o'er all other thing.
Na he, that aye has lived free
May not know well the properté,
The anger, na the wretched doom
That is coupled to foul thraldóm.
But, if he had essayed it,
Then all *perquer*[3] he should it wit,
And should think freedom more to prize
Than all the gold in world that is.
Thus contrary things evermare
Discoverings of the tother are, &c.

The misfortunes which attended Bruce during the

[1] Nor else. [2] Eagerly desired. [3] Perfectly; parcœur.

first years of his reign are well known, but Barber's minute details give them a new interest. While his hero is wandering among the mountains, after the fatal defeat of Methven, indebted to the ever inventive genius of Sir James Douglas, for the scanty supply of game and fish, which was barely sufficient for the subsistence of his few adherents; obliged to separate himself from his queen and family, to traverse the whole country as an outlaw, and to seek an asylum in the unfrequented island of Ruchrin, his biographer gives a circumstantial detail of his daily difficulties, of his paternal solicitude for his little army, of his personal exploits, and of the patience with which he submitted to more than a soldier's share in the common hardships.

In this desperate situation he was relieved from utter ruin, by the death of his formidable antagonist Edward I. and the supineness of his successor. But Bruce had already faced his enemies; had formed the plan which he never afterwards abandoned; and had trained his followers to a mode of warfare, which could scarcely fail of success. Always watchful, enterprising, and invisible, he fell upon the straggling parties of his enemies by rapid and unexpected marches, and easily eluded a contest with disproportionate forces, in a country with which he was intimately acquainted, but where they were under

the necessity of trusting to unexperienced or faithless guides. Though often on the brink of ruin, though actually hunted by blood-hounds, he never despaired. Success gave him new friends, his conciliating manners preserved the old; fort after fort was surprised, or reduced to surrender, and was immediately dismantled, because he was sure of a retreat in his native mountains; whereas the defeats of his enemies became irretrievable.

It was in these circumstances, and when the whole of Scotland was cleared of his enemies, that he ventured his crown and life, in the decisive battle of Bannock-burn, which crushed the whole army, and nearly the courage, of the English. This battle, on which Barber naturally dwells with considerable exultation, occupies two books, the twelfth and thirteenth; and the remaining seven contain the exploits of Edward Bruce in Ireland; the several predatory incursions into England, which were undertaken by Douglas, Murray, and other leaders; the death of Douglas in Spain, and all the remaining incidents of Robert Bruce's reign.

In describing the campaign in Ireland, in which the king had marched an army to the assistance of his brother, Barber suddenly stops to relate an anecdote, which a monkish historian would probably have thought beneath the dignity of history;

but the simple and affectionate heart of our poet, would have prompted him to risk a much greater indecorum, for the purpose of illustrating the humane character of his hero. The king was at this time preparing to return with his army from the south of Ireland towards Carrickfergus.

And when that they all ready were,
The king has heard a woman cry,
He asked what that was *in hy*.[1]
" It is the *lavender*,[2] sir, said ane,
" That her child-ill right now has taen:
" And we mon leave behind us here;
" Therefore she makes yon evil cheer."
The king said, " Certes, it were pité
" That she in that point left should be,
" For, certes, I trow there is no man
" That will ne rue a woman than."
His host all there arrested he,
And *gert*[3] a tent soon *stinted*[4] be;
And gert her gang in hastily,
And other women to be her by.
While she was delivered, he abode,
And syne, forth on his wayis rode,

[1] In haste.
[2] *Lavendiere*, Fr.; laundress, washer-woman.
[3] Caused. [4] Stretched.

And, how she forth should carried be,
Ere he forth fared, ordained he.
This was a full great courtesy!
That such a king, and so mighty,
Gert his men dwell in this manére,
But for a poor lavender!

This little incident, and innumerable details contained in Barber's narrative, shew that it must have been very principally compiled from the relations of eye-witnesses. Hence the variety in his descriptions of battles, which are as much diversified as the scenery of the country where they were fought. But a soldier will sometimes exaggerate the exploits of a leader in whose glory he participates; and Barber was occasionally, in a very awkward dilemma, between his love of veracity, and his fear of depreciating the valour of a hero to whom, in his own opinion, no efforts were impossible. Of this there is a curious instance in the beginning of the sixth book, where Bruce singly discomfits a body of two hundred men of Galloway, of whom he kills fourteen. Barber seems to have hesitated: but fortunately his learning comes in aid of his propensity; he recollects a parallel instance in the history of Thebes, relates it much at length, and thus silences all his scruples: those of

his readers probably would have been still more easily satisfied.

Barber's poetical character cannot be more correctly described than in the words of his editor. "Here (says Mr. Pinkerton) the reader will find "few of the graces of fine poetry, little of the "Attic dress of the muse: but here are life, and "spirit, and ease, and plain sense, and pictures of "real manners, and perpetual incident and enter-"tainment. The language is remarkably good for "the time; and far superior, in neatness and ele-"gance, even to that of Gawin Douglas, who "wrote more than a century after."

The following extract from the Bruce is selected, not as giving the most brilliant specimen of Barber's poetical talent, but as forming a distinct episode, and consequently possessing an independent interest; and because it is sufficiently long, to afford a fair estimate of the poet's general style and language, and is an example of the fashionable mode of argument, in that story-telling age, when apologue was necessary even in the eloquence of the pulpit, and employed in the discussion of the fate of armies and of empires.

Douglas is represented as dissuading Murray from hazarding a battle against the superior forces of Edward III.

The Lord Douglas said, " By Saint Bride,
" It were great folly at this tide,
" Till us with swilk an host to fight,
" It growis, ilka day, of might;
" And has victual therewith plenté.
" And in their country here are we,
" Where there may come us no succoúrs;
" Hard is to make us here *rescours*.[1]
" Na we us may *ferrar*[2] meat to get:
" Swilk as we have here mon we eat.
" Do we with our foes therefore,
" That are here lyand us before,
" As Ich heard tell this other year
" That a fox did with a fishér."

" How did the fox?" the Earl gan say.
He said, " A fisher whilom lay
" Beside a river, for to get
" His nets, that he had therein set.
" A little lodge thereby he made;
" And there-within a bed had;
" And a little fire also.
" A door there was, *forouten*[3] mo.
" A night, his nettis for to see,
" He rose; and there well long dwelt he.

[1] Rescue. Fr. [2] Farther.
[3] Without.

" And when he had done his deed,
" Toward his lodge again he *yeid*;[1]
" And, with light of the little fire,
" That in the lodge was burning *shyr*,[2]
" Intill his lodge a fox he saw,
" That fast on a salmon gan gnaw.
" Then, till the door he went in hy,
" And drew his sword *deliverly*:
" And said, ' *Reiffar!*[3] you mon here out!'
" The fox, that was in full great doubt,
" Looked about, some hole to see:
" But none issue perceive couth he,
" But where the man stood sturdily.
" A *lauchtane*[4] mantle then him by,
" Lying upon the bed he saw;
" And with his teeth he gan it draw
" Outo'er the fire: and when the man
" Saw his mantle lye burning then,
" To rid it ran he hastily.
" The fox got out then in great hy:
" And held his way his *warrand*[5] till
" The man let him beguiled ill,

[1] Went; hied. [2] Clear. Anglo Sax. scyre.

[3] Be-reaver, reaver, robber.

[4] Mr. Pinkerton is unable to explain this word. Query, if it be *Louthian*, the place where it was manufactured, or where such mantles were usually worn?

[5] Place of security. Garant. Fr. Warrant, warren. Eng.

" That he his good salmon had *tint*;[1]
" And also had his mantle *brint*:[2]
" And the fox *scaithless*[3] got away.
" This ensample, well I may say,
" By yon host; and us that are here.
" We are the fox; and they the fisher,
" That *stecks*[4] *forouch*[5] us the way.
" They ween we may na get away,
" But right where they lie. But, pardie,
" All as they think it shall not be,
" For I have gert see us a *gate*[6]
" (Suppose that it be some deal wet)
" A page of ours we shall not *tine*.[7]
" Our foes, for this small *truantine*,[8]
" Means well we shall pride us *swa*[9]
" That we plainly on hand shall *ta*[10]

[1] Lost.

[2] Burnt: in Old English, *brent*. The place of the vowel in such words was, during a long period, undetermined.

[3] Without harm.

[4] Bars, shuts,

[5] Before.

[6] Way.

[7] Lose.

[8] Wandering. Fr. It seems to mean, " Our foes hope " that, to avoid *this little circuit*, we shall be so proud as to " give them battle."

[9] So.

[10] Take.

"To give them openly bataille:
"But at this time their thought shall fail.
"For we, tomorn here, all the day,
"Shall make us merry as we may:
"And make us boon against the night;
"And then ger make our fires light;
"And blow our hornys, and make fare
"As all the world our own were,
"While that the night well fallen be;
"And then, with all our harness, we
"Shall take our way homeward in hy.
"And we shall *gyit*[1] be *graithly*,[2]
"While we be out of their dangér
"That lies now enclosed here.
"Then shall we all be at our will.
"And they shall let them trumpet ill,
"Fra they wyt well we be away."
To this wholly assented they, &c.

The story here told by Douglas, has every appearance of being a French fabliau: and Barber has unquestionably borrowed, from the same language, the romance of FIER'ABRAS, which the king relates to his followers during their tedious passage of Loch Lomond. (See book iii. v. 435. edit. 1790.) It is not transcribed here, because

[1] Guised. [2] Cautiously?

it is unnecessary to multiply extracts from a work which is so easily attainable: it might, indeed, be proper to apologize for the length of the foregoing specimen, but that the capricious and obsolete orthography of the ancient MS. to which Mr. Pinkerton has, with great propriety, scrupulously adhered, may possibly have deterred many readers, from attempting to peruse this very curious and entertaining historical poem.

CHAPTER X.

Reign of Henry IV.—Andrew of Wyntown—Extracts from his "original Chronicle of Scotland."—Thomas Occleve.—Anonymous English Poetry.

ANDREW of Wyntown claims a place in our catalogue of English poets, in consequence of his having written, in tolerable eight-syllable verse, and in very pure language, his "Orygynale Cronykil" of Scotland, from the creation of the world to the year 1408. This is a very curious work, of which a most sumptuous and apparently correct edition, from a comparison of the best MSS. has lately (in 1795) been given to the public by Mr. Macpherson, together with a list of various readings, many valuable historical notes, a copious index, and a most useful glossary.

All the information that the learned editor has been able to collect respecting his author, amounts to this; that Andrew of Wyntown was a canon regular of the priory of St. Andrews, and that, in or about the year 1395, he was, by the favour of his fellow-canons, elected prior of the monastery

of St. Serf's island, in Loch-Levin, one of the most ancient religious establishments in Scotland. As he was not likely to be chosen for such an office in very early youth, and as he complains much of the infirmities of age, while occupied in his Chronicle, which appears, from internal evidence, to have been finished between the years 1420 and 1424, he was probably born, not long after the middle of the fourteenth century.

With respect to his poetical talents, the opinion of his editor is, that "his work in general partakes little "or nothing of the nature of poetry, unless rhyme "can be said to constitute poetry; yet, he now "and then throws in some touches of true poetic "description." This, indeed, seems to be as much as can be fairly expected from a metrical annalist; for dates and numerals are, of necessity, unpoetical; and, perhaps, the ablest modern versifier who should undertake to enumerate, in metre, the years of our Lord in only one century, would feel some respect for the ingenuity, with which Wyntown has contrived to vary his rhymes, thoughout such a formidable chronological series, as he has ventured to encounter. His genius is certainly inferior to that of his predecessor, Barber; but at least his versification is easy, his language pure, and his style often animated. As an historian, he is

highly valuable; but perhaps it may be more amusing to the reader, to examine him both as a narrator and as a poet, in the early and nearly fabulous part of his work, for which purpose some extracts are here selected from his history of Macbeth.

It is well known that Shakspeare's immediate model was Hollinshed, who abridged the work of Bellenden, translated from the Latin of Boyce. Wyntown's narrative is, in some respects, very different, and, in one instance at least, is much more dramatic.

This author gives the following as the popular and fabulous account of Macbeth's parentage:—

But, as we find by some storiés
Gotten he was *on*[1] *ferly*[2] wise,
His mother to woods made oft repair
For the delight of wholesome air.
So she past upon a day
Till a wood, her for to play;
She met *of case*[3] with a fair man,
(Ne'er none so fair as she thought than
Before then had she seen with sight.)
Of beauty pleasant, and of height

[1] In. [2] Wonderful.
[3] By chance; per cas. Fr.

Proportion'd well, in all measúre,
Of limb and *lyth* [1] a fair figure.
In swilk acquaintance so they fell,
That, thereof shortly for to tell.

The reader certainly has foreseen that this very beautiful man was no other than the devil, who became the father of Macbeth, as he had, some centuries before, become the father of Merlin; and who presented to his paramour a ring, in token that their future son should be a great man, and that—

"No man should be born of wife
"Of power to 'reave him his life."

Macbeth's ambition is excited, not by actually meeting the weird sisters, but by a dream.—

A night [2] he thought in his dreaming,
That *sittand* [3] he was beside the king
At a seat in hunting: so
Intil his leash had grey-hounds two,
He thought, while he was so sittand,
He saw three women by gangand;

[1] Joint; litha neaso. Goth. [2] *i. e.* one night.
[3] Sitting. *And* is the old Saxon as well as French termination of the participle.

And *they*[1] women then thought he
Three weird sisters most like to be.
The first he heard say, gangand by,
" Lo! yonder the thane of Crumbauchty!"
The 'tother woman said again,
" Of Murray yonder I see the thane."
The third then said " I see the king."
All this he heard in his dreaming.
Soon after that, in his youth-head,
Of *thir*[2] thanedoms he thane was made;
Syn next he thought to be king,
Fra[3] Duncan's days had ta'en ending,
The fantasy thus of his dream
Moved him most to slay his *eme*[4]—
And dame Ganok his eme's wife
Took, and led with her his life,
And held her both his wife and queen——

The story of lady Macbeth, therefore, seems to have been afterwards added. Duncan's two legitimate sons, and Malcolm (who it seems was illegitimate) fly to England; but the enmity between the usurper and Macduff has a separate origin.

[1] These, or those: in the original *thai*.
[2] These.
[3] From; from the time when; as soon as.
[4] Uncle. Anglo-Sax.

Macbeth, according to Wyntown, meaning to fortify the hill at Dunsinnane, pressed all the teams in the neighbourhood, and having observed some oxen, the property of Macduff, to fail in their work, he threatened, " despiteously," to put Macduff's own neck into the yoke. The subsequent conduct of the thane of Fife, is thus minutely and curiously related:

Fra the thane Macbeth heard speak,
That he would put in yoke his neck,
Of all his thought he made no song;
But, privily, out of the throng
With slight he got; and the *spencér* [1]
A loaf him gave till his suppér.
And as soon as he might see
His time and opportunity,
Out of the court he past, and ran,
And that loaf bare with him than
To the watér of Erin. That bread
He gave the boat-wards, him to lead,
And on the south half him to set,
But [2] delay, or any let.
That passage call'd was after than
Long time Port NEBARIAN;

[1] Le dispensier; the dispenser of provisions.
[2] Without; be-out. Sax.

The HAVEN OF BREAD that should be
Called in-til property.

Then follows a fine Gothic incident. Macduff, aware that his flight would be discovered, and that he should be immediately pursued, passes through Fife to his strong castle of Kennauchy, and then proceeds to hasten the march of the English forces; having first apprised his wife of his intention, and directed her to "hold Macbeth in fair treaty," till she should discover a boat sailing to the southward; at sight of which she should inform the king that his enemy was escaped to England, but would speedily meet him in arms at Dunsinnane.

Till Kennauchy Macbeth came soon,
And *felny*[1] great there would have done;
But, this lady, with fair treaty,
His purpose *letted*[2] done to be.
And soon, fra she the sail up saw,
Then til Macbeth, with little awe,
She said "Macbeth look up, and see,
"Under yon sail forsooth is he,
"The thane of Fife whom thou has sought.
"Trow thou well, and doubt thou nought,

[1] Felonie. Fr.; cruelty. [2] Prevented.

" If ever thou shall him see again,
" He shall thee set intil great pain
" Syne thou would have put his neck
" Intil thy yokes. Now will I speak
" With thee no more; fare on thy way,
" Either well, or ill, as happen may."

Had Shakspeare met with this spirited scene, he would probably have been glad to contrast the heroine of Fife with the ferocious lady Macbeth, as well as to have saved the miserable contrivance of sending three murderers, to destroy the wife and children of a powerful thane, in a fortified and garrisoned castle.

The conversation between Malcolm and Macduff (Shaksp. Act IV. Scene 3.), and the incident of Birnam wood, are told nearly in the same way by Hollinshed and Wyntown; but the death of Macbeth is attributed, not to Macduff, but to a certain knight, who had been brought into the world by means of the Cæsarean operation.

The *flittand* [1] wood they called aye
That, long time after-hand that day.
Of this when he had seen that sight,
He was right wo, and took to flight:

[1] Moving.

And o'er the *Mount*[1] they chased him than
Till the wood of Lunfanan.
This Macduff was there most fell,
And on that chace than most *cruél*.[2]
But a knight, that in that chace
Till this Macbeth than nearest was,
Macbeth turned him again,
And said, " *Lurdane*,[3] thou pricks in vain:
" For thou may nought be he, I trow,
" That to dead shall slay me now.
" That man is not born of wife
" Of power to reave me my life."
The knight said, " I was never born,
" But of my mother's womb was shorn.
" Now shall thy treason here take end,
" For *to thy father* I shall thee send."

The last line seems to contain an allusion to Macbeth's supposed birth, and to be a return for the injurious appellation of *lurdane*.

Wyntown, in his account of king Arthur, mentions, among the historians of his *Gests*, an author who is totally unknown to our poetical antiquaries.

[1] The hill. *i. e.* the mountains now commonly called the Grampians.

[2] Keen, steady.

[3] Clumsy fellow; lourdain. Old Fr.

He calls him "Huchown of the Awle Ryale," and tells us that

> He made the great Gest of Arthur,
> And the adventure of Sir Gawain;
> The 'Pistle als of Sweet Susanne.

Mr. Macpherson seems to think that Huchown (Hugh) may be the Christian name of the Clerk of Tranent,

> That made the aventures of Sir Gawain,

(Dunbar's Lament, &c.); but perhaps he was the author of the Norman original, and Wyntown's anxiety to establish the authenticity of his narrative, may be explained, by his general fondness for exploits of Chivalry, a subject on which he always dwells with pleasure.

The love of tournaments, indeed, seems to have been carried almost to madness in Scotland, as well as in England, before the general adoption of fire-arms; as will appear from Wyntown's account of these exhibitions at Berwick, about the year 1388: but we must first exhibit the state of the country at the time of this festivity.

> About Perth then was the country
> So waste, that wonder was to see;

For, intil well great space thereby
Was neither house left, na *herbry*[1]
Of deer there was then swilk *foison*[2]
That they would near come to the town,
So great default was near that stead,
That many were in hunger dead.

A carl, they said, was near thereby,
That would set *settys*[3] commonly
Children and women for to *sla*,[4]
And swains that he might *over-ta*,[5]
And eat them all that he get might;
Christian Klek til name he *hight*.[6]
That sorry life continued he,
While waste, *but*[7] folk, was the country'.

Such were the consequences of war in the rich neighbourhood of Perth; and the "Forest," the scene of Douglas's exploits, and the environs of Berwick, were not likely to be much better cultivated, when Sir Henry of Lancaster, earl of Derby, impatient of the inactivity attendant on a truce, repaired to the frontiers to request of Douglas "three courses of war." This justing, though it

[1] Harbour, lodging; herberger. Fr.
[2] Plenty. Fr. [3] Traps. [4] Slay.
[5] Overtake. [6] Was called. [7] Without.

ended without bloodshed, was so satisfactory to all parties that it produced a second, in which twenty combatants appeared on a side.

A-pon the morn, when that *they*[1] were
Makand them *boon*[2] *himself*[3] came there,
And found all open the entrée,
And, *nought-forthy*,[4] there knocked he,
Without the door all privily;
While Ramsay til him came in hy
And gert him enter. Soon then he
Said, "God mot at your liking be!"
Syne said he, "Lords, in what mannere
"Will ye run at this justing here?"
"With plate shilds," said Ramsay,
"As it *affairs*[5] to this play."
"Ah sirs, by our Lord," said he,
"So should no man here prized be,
"For none to other might do ill:
"But, *an*[6] it likand were you til,
"As men *hostayis*[7] for to *ryn*[8]
"So might men price of worship win."

[1] The Scotch knights.
[2] Ready.
[3] The earl of Derby.
[4] Nevertheless.
[5] Belongs; *efferis*, Original.
[6] If.
[7] Enemies?
[8] Run.

Quoth Alexander the Ramsay,
" It shall like til us all, parfay,
" That ilk man run his fellow till
" In *kirtle*[1] alone, if that ye will.
The Earl said then debonairly,
" Nay, that is all too hard truly."
Quoth William of the Towers, than,
" Sir, if ye na will let ilk man
" Ryn all bare visage, and ye
" Who eschews first, right soon shall see."
The Earl said meekly, " Sirs, nay,
" Yet that is all too hard, parfay:
" But, as I said you, will ye do?
" There should some price follow us to."
Thereto they all gave their consent
And he forth til his fellows went.

This tournament, the description of which occupies about a hundred lines, must have been very magnificent, for three English knights were killed; one of the Scottish knights died of his wounds, and another, Sir William the Ramsay, had his head pierced with a spear, so that a priest was sent for, to receive his confession, which he gave without taking off his helmet; a circumstance which " the

[1] Under-garment; tunic. Anglo-Sax.

"good earl Derby" considered as so very agreeable, that he exclaimed—

I would God of his grace would send
To me in swilk manere to end!

But the preceding extract was transcribed chiefly because it gives such a minute description of the ceremonies which constituted the politeness or "courtesy" of our ancestors. The Scottish knights, we see, kept their door constantly open, but lord Derby was too great a proficient in civility, to enter without an express invitation. The open door, it seems, was indispensable on such occasions, as being a symbol of knightly hospitality: and for this reason it is carefully noted by our author, on another occasion. In 1408 the earl of Mar passed over into France—

With a noble company,
Well array'd and daintily,
Knights and squires, great gentlemen, &c.

In Paris he held a royal state,
At the sign known the Tin-plate;
All the time that he was there
Bidand,[1] twelve weeks full, or mare,

[1] Dwelling.

Door and gate both gert he
Ay stand open, that men might *se*[1]
Enter all time at their pleasance,
Til eat or drink, or sing, or dance,
Of all nations generally
Commended he was greatumly
Of wit, virtue, and largess——

Many more particulars respecting tournaments, may be found in the account of Sir David Lindsay's duel with "the Lord of the Wellis" (Vol. II. p. 353.), and in other parts of the work.

Upon the whole, Wyntown's Chronicle is certainly a valuable acquisition to our stock of early literature. It is a curious specimen of language and poetry, and contains much information for the historical antiquary. The more indolent reader will, perhaps, be amused to observe the instances of our holy prior's credulity: as, for instance, the miracles related of St. Serf (Vol. I. p. 130.); a still more singular miracle (Vol. I. p. 152.), the story of Pope Joan (Vol. I. p. 165.); the tales in the thirteenth chapter of book vi. (Vol. I. p. 194.); and the story of Matilda, wife of our Henry I. which is usually applied to the Lady Godiva (Vol. II. p. 50.). This credulity, however, was the charac-

[1] So.

teristic of the age, rather than of the writer; and a knowledge of the opinions and prejudices of mankind, is always a necessary comment on their actions. From a want of this knowledge, which no ingenuity can bestow, and which, from the scantiness of original materials, no diligence can acquire, our modern surveys of history, are always, to a certain degree, insipid. The distance from which we view the scene of action is too great; the principal groups may remain, but the features and countenances vanish. Those, therefore, who are so inquisitive as to wish for the portraits of the actors, must consult the gossiping histories of contemporary writers; must associate with Froissart and Wyntown, submit to the punctilio and formality of the times, and listen to long stories, with complacency and patience.

Of Wyntown's English contemporaries, there is only one, whose name has descended to posterity. This is Occleve, or Hoccleve, "a feeble writer "(says Mr. Warton), whose chief merit seems to "be, that his compositions continued to propagate "and establish those improvements in our language, "which were now beginning to take place. He "was educated in the municipal law; as were "both Chaucer and Gower; and it reflects no "small honour on that very liberal profession, that

"its students were some of the first who attempted "to polish and adorn the English tongue."

Since the publication of Mr. Warton's history, a selection from Occleve's poems has been printed by Mr. Mason, and has proved the justice of the foregoing criticism. The most favourable specimen of Occleve's poetry is his "Story of Jonathas," which the reader will find in the "Shepherd's Pipe," by William Brown, author of Britannia's Pastorals.

As it is not easy to select a tolerable extract from this writer, I shall here insert two specimens of contemporary, though anonymous, poetry, both of which possess considerable merit. The first is taken from Mr. Ritson's very curious collection of "Ancient Songs," p. 44.

"*Again my will I take my leave.*"[a]

Now *Bairnes buird*,[1] bold and blithe,
To blessen you here now am I bound:
I thank you all a thousand *sithe*[2]
And pray God save you whole and sound.

[1] Bairns are gentlemen, barons; buird, bird, or bride, is a common name for young women: but perhaps the word in this place may be an abbreviation of *brydest*. Sax.; *most noble*.

[2] Times.

Where'er ye go, on grass or ground,
He you govern withouten *greve!*[1]
For friendship that I here have found,
Again my will I take my leave.

For friendship, and for giftis good,
For meat and drink so great plenty,
That Lord that *raught*[2] was on the *rood*[3]
He keep this noble company:
On sea or land, where that ye be,
He govern you withouten greve;
So good desport ye *han*[4] made me
Again my will I take my leave.

Again my will altho I wend,
I may not allway dwellen here:
For every thing shall have an end,
And friendis are not aye *y-fere*.[5]
Be we never so lief and dear,
Out of this world all shall we *meve*.[6]
And when we *busk*[7] unto our bier,
Again our will we take our leave.

[1] Grief.
[2] Stretched.
[3] Cross.
[4] Have.
[5] Together.
[6] Move, remove.
[7] Go.

And wend we shall: I wot not when,
Nor whither-ward that we shall fare:
But endless bliss, or aye to *brenn*,[1]
To every man is *garked yare*.[2]
For this, I *rede*,[3] each man beware;
And let our work our wordis *preve*[4]
So that no sin our soul *forfare*[5]
When that our life hath taken his leave.

When that our life his leave hath *laucht*[6]
Our body lieth bounden by the *wowe*:[7]
Our riches all from us be reft,
In clottis cold our corse is throw.
Where are thy friends? who wol thee know?
Let see who wol thy soul relieve?
I rede thee, man, ere thou lie low,
Be ready aye to take thy leave.

Be ready aye, whate'er befall,
All suddenly lest thou be *kiht*[8]
Thou *wost*[9] ne'er when thy Lord wol call;
Look that thy lamp be brenning bright.

[1] Burn. [2] Prepared ready.
[3] Advise. [4] Prove.
[5] Forfeit, lose, destroy. [6] Left, *i. e.* taken.
[7] *Wow*, is care, misery, &c; but the construction is by no means clear. [8] Caught. [9] Knowest.

For *'leve*[1] me well, but thou have light,
Right foul thy Lord will thee repreve.
And *fleme*[2] thee far out of his sight,
For, all too late, thou took thy leave.

Now God that was in Bethlem *bore*[3]
He give us grace to serve him so,
That we may come his face *to-fore*,[4]
Out of this world when we shall go;
And, for to amend that we mis-do,
In clay ere that we cling and cleave:
And make us even with friend and foe,
And in good time to take our leave.

Now haveth good day, good men all,
Haveth good day, young and old;
Haveth good day both great and small,
And *graunt-merci*[5] a thousand fold.
Gif[6] ever I might, full fain I wold
Don[7] aught that were unto you *leve*.[8]
Christ keep you out of carés cold;
For now is time to take my leave.

[1] Believe.
[2] Banish. Sax.
[3] Born.
[4] Before.
[5] Grand-merci, Fr.; grammercy, thanks.
[6] If.
[7] Doen, do.
[8] *Lief*, agreeable.

The second poem is of a very different cast: it is a transcript from the Cotton MSS. Galba E. ix.; "perhaps (says Mr. Warton) coeval with Chaucer, "which describes the power of money with great "humour, and in no common vein of satire,"

Incipit narratio de Domino Denario.

In earth it is a little thing,
And reigns as a rich king,
Where he is lent in land:
SIR PENNY is his name call'd:
He makes both young and ald,
Bow until his hand.

Popes, kings, and emperoûrs,
Bishops, abbots, and prioûrs,
Parson, priest, and knight,
Dukes, earls, and ilk baroûn,
To serve him are they full *boun*,[1]
Both by day and night.

Sir Penny changes manis mood,
And *gars*[2] them oft to down ther hood,
And to rise *him again*.[3]

[1] Boon, ready. [2] Causes.
[3] Before him.

Men honours him with great reverence,
Makes full mickle obedience,
  Unto that little swain.

In king's court is it no boot
Against Sir Penny for to *moot;*[1]
  So mickle is he of might:
He is so witty and so strong,
That be it never so mickle wrong,
  He will make it right.

With Penny may men women *till,*[2]
Be they never so strange of will;
  So oft may it be seen:
Long with him will they not chide,
For he may ger them *trail side*[3]
  In good scarlet and green.

He may buy both heaven and hell,
And ilka thing that is to sell,
  In earth has he swich grace:
He may loose, and he may bind,
The poor are aye put behind
  Where he comes in place.

[1] Plead. [2] Gain.
[3] Wear trailing gowns?

When he begins him to mell,
He makes meek that ere was fell;
And weak that bold has been.
All ye need full soon is sped,
Both withouten *borgh and wed*[1]
Where Penny goes between.

The *deoms-men*[2] he makes so blind,
That hi may not the right find;
Ne the sooth to see:
For to give doom them is full *lath*,[3]
Therewith to make Sir Penny wrath,
Full dear with them is he,

There strife was Penny makes peace,
Of all angers he may release,
In land where he will lend;
Of foes may he make friends sad,
Of counsel there them never be *rad*[4]
That may have him to friend.

That sire is set on high dess,
And served with many rich mess,
At the high board.

[1] Borrowing and pledging.
[2] Judges.
[3] Loth.
[4] Void.

The more he is to men plenté,
The more *yearned*[1] alway is he;
And holden dear in hoard.

He makes many be forsworn,
And some life and soul forlorn,
Him to get and win:
Other good will they none have,
But that little round knave,
Their *bales*[2] for to *blin*.[3]

On him wholly their heart is set,
Him for to love will they not let
Neither for good ne ill;
All that he will in earth have done
Ilka man grants it full soon
Right at his own will:
He may both lend and give,
He may ger both slay and live,
Both by *frith and fell*.[4]

Penny is a good felláw,
Men welcomes him in deed and *saw*.[5]
Come he never so oft,

[1] Desired.
[2] Misfortunes.
[3] End, terminate.
[4] By water and land.
[5] Words.

He is not welcomed as a guest,
But evermore served with the best,
  And made to sit full soft.

Whoso is sted in any need,
With Sir Penny may they speed,
  Howsoever they betide:
He that Sir Penny is withal,
Shall have his will in steed and stall,
  When other are set beside.

Sir Penny gers in rich weed
Full many go, and ride on steed,
  In this world wide;
In ilka game, and ilka play,
The mastery is given aye
  To Penny for his pride.

Sir Penny over all gets the *gre*,[1]
Both in burgh and in cité,
  In castle and in tower.
Withouten either spear or shield,
Is he the best in frith or field,
  And *stalworthest*[2] in *stour*.[3]

[1] Degree, step.
[2] Boldest, strongest.
[3] Fight, battle.

In ilka place the sooth is seen,
Sir Penny is over *albidene*[1]
  Master most in mood;
And all is as he will command,
Against his *steven*[2] dare no man stand,
  Neither by land ne flood.

Sir Penny may full mickle avail,
To them that has need of counsail,
  As seen is *in assize:*[3]
He *lenketh*[4] life, and saves from *dead.*[5]
But love it not overwell, I rede,
  For sin of covetise!

If thou have hap tresoúr to win,
Delight thee not too mickle therein,
  Ne *nything*[6] thereof be:
But spend it as well as thou can,
So that thou love both God and man
  In perfect charity.

God grant us grace, with heart and will,
The goods that he has given us til
  Well and wisely to spend.

[1] Altogether.
[2] Voice.
[3] In courts of judicature.
[4] Lengthens.
[5] Death.
[6] Careless.

And so our lives here for to lead,
That we may have his bliss to meed,
Ever, withouten end. Amen.

The praise of Sir Penny appears to have been a favourite subject with the northern minstrels; for a poem with the same title, is to be found in Lord Haile's Collection, p. 153; and another in Mr. Ritson's "Ancient Songs," p. 76.

CHAPTER XI.

Reign of Henry V.—Life of Lydgate—Character of his Writings—Specimens of his "Troye Booke."

AMONG the immediate successors of Chaucer, in England, John Lydgate, the celebrated monk of Bury, is confessedly the most tolerable. The time of his birth is not exactly known; but the documents extracted by Mr. Warton, from a register of the church of Bury, in the Cotton library, will ascertain it, with sufficient precision. It appears that he was ordained a subdeacon A. D. 1389; a deacon in 1393; and a priest in 1397: so that, even if we suppose him to have received the first ordination at fourteen years of age, he cannot have been born later than 1375; that is to say, twenty-five years before the death of Chaucer. This date naturally assigns him to the reign of Henry V. at whose command, he undertook his metrical history of the siege of Troy, the best and most popular of his almost innumerable productions.

Few writers have been more admired by their

cotemporaries; yet none have been treated with more severity by modern critics. The learned Editor of the "Reliques of Ancient Poetry," mentions him with compassionate contempt; Mr. Ritson ridicules his "cart-loads" of poetical rubbish; and Mr. Pinkerton considers him as positively stupid. Mr. Warton alone has thought it worth while to study him with much attention, or to attempt a general discussion of his literary character; and his opinion is well worth transcribing.

"He was a monk of the Benedictine abbey of "Bury, in Suffolk. After a short education at "Oxford, he travelled into France and Italy; and "returned a complete master of the language and "literature of both countries. He chiefly studied "the Italian and French poets, particularly Dante, "Boccacio, and Alain Chartier; and became so "distinguished a proficient in polite learning, that "he opened a school in his monastery, for teach-"ing the sons of the nobility the arts of versifica-"tion, and the elegancies of composition. Yet "although philology was his object, he was not "unfamiliar with the fashionable philosophy; he "was not only a poet and a rhetorician, but a "geometrician, an astronomer, a theologist, and a "disputant.

"On the whole, I am of opinion, that Lydgate

" made considerable additions to those amplifica-
" tions of our language, in which Chaucer, Gower,
" and Occleve led the way: and that he is the
" first of our writers whose style is clothed with
" that perspicuity in which the English phraseology
" appears at this day, to an English reader.

" To enumerate Lydgate's pieces, would be to
" write the catalogue of a little library. No poet
" seems to have possessed greater versatility of
" talents. He moves with equal ease in every
" mode of composition. His hymns, and his bal-
" lads, have the same degree of merit: and whether
" his subject be the life of a hermit or a hero; of
" St. Austin, or Guy earl of Warwick; ludicrous
" or legendary; religious or romantic; a history
" or an allegory; he writes with facility. His
" transitions were rapid, from works of the most
" serious and laborious kind, to sallies of levity,
" and pieces of popular entertainment. His muse
" was of universal access; and he was not only
" the poet of his monastery, but of the world in
" general. If a disguising was intended by the
" company of goldsmiths, a mask before his majesty
" at Eltham, a may-game for the sheriffs and alder-
" men of London, a mumming before the lord
" mayor, a procession of pageants from the crea-
" tion for the festival of Corpus Christi, or a carol

" for the coronation, Lydgate was consulted, and
" gave the poetry.

" His manner is naturally *verbose* and *diffuse*.
" This circumstance contributed in no small de-
" gree to give a clearness and a fluency to his
" phraseology. For the same reason he is often
" tedious and languid. His chief excellence is in
" description, especially when the subject admits
" a flowery diction. He is seldom pathetic or
" animated.

Lydgate's most esteemed works are, his "*History of Thebes*," his "*Falls of Princes*," and his "*History of the Siege of Troy*."

The "History of Thebes," which Speght has printed in his edition of Chaucer, and which was intended as a continuation of the Canterbury Tales, contains some poetical passages, which Mr. Warton has extracted. But Lydgate's style, though natural, and sometimes rich, does not possess that strength and conciseness which is observable in the works of his master. It is dangerous for a mere versifier to attempt the completion of a plan, which has been begun by a poet. Lydgate's poem is not long; but it is possible to be tedious in a very small compass.

The "Falls of Princes" are a translation from Boccace, or rather from a French paraphrase

of his work, "De Casibus," written by Laurent de Premierfait, which was originally printed at Bruges in 1476, and at Lyons in 1483. Lydgate's poem was probably useful, when first written, as a book of reference, to those who could not consult the original; but the day of its popularity is past.

The Troy Book, however, containing (as the title-page assures us) "the only true and sincere "history of the wars between the Grecians and "the Trojans," deserves more consideration. Being a translation from Colonna's prose history, which contained the substance of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, it comprises all the materials of one class of Romantic history; and is valuable as a specimen of the learning, as well as of the credulity, of our ancestors. The story is so much connected with our early studies; that story is so comically adapted to the usages and manners of chivalry; its author is so minute and circumstantial in describing events which never happened; is so precise in his dates and numbers; so full of event and bustle; and so prodigal of ornament; that if this poem be no longer resorted to by common readers, as a source of amusement, it is, perhaps, only because two close columns of black letter, presenting ninety lines in a page, are too

formidable to be encountered by any eyes, but those of a veteran in antiquarian researches.

The most esteemed edition of this work is that of 1555, printed by Thomas Marshe, under the care of one John Braham, who corrected it from many errors of the original edition, given by Pinson in 1513. It has been already observed, that Lydgate undertook this poem at the request of Henry V. when prince of Wales: it was begun in 1412, and finished in 1420. The first of these dates is rather oddly expressed in the following lines.

And of the time to maken mention,
When I began on this translation,
It was the year, soothly for to sayn,
Fourteen complete tho of his father's reign.
The time of year, shortly to conclude,
When twenty grees was Phebus' altitude.
The hour, when he hath made his steedes draw
His rosen chariot low under the wawe
To bathe his beams, &c.

Here "the year *fourteen* complete" must mean the *fourteenth*, i. e. 1412; for Henry IV. who began his reign in September 1399, and died in March 1413, did not reign fourteen complete

years. The remainder of the description, though now rather obscure, was certainly intended to express, very exactly, the moment at which Lydgate began his poem; and was probably intelligible to contemporary readers. Judicial astrology was then in vogue; and he was anxious to prove, that he had commenced his operation at a lucky moment. His work, perhaps, may not give us reason to believe in the poetical influence of the stars; but we must at least approve his modesty, in trusting the perfection of his verses to good fortune, rather than to genius.

Every one knows that Laomedon, king of Troy, had the rashness to offend Jason and Hercules, who stopped in his country on their way to Colchis; and that Hercules revenged this "uncurtesy" by destroying the city of Troy. Such an episode in the adventures of the Argonauts, naturally connects the second Trojan war with their expedition, which is therefore related by Lydgate as minutely as if he had been their ship-mate, and had kept a journal of the voyage. The following lines describe part of the ceremonial used by king Oetes, after Jason's first audience.

The time approached, and gan to nigh fast,
That officers full busily them cast

To make ready, with all their busy cure,
And in the halle *bordes*[1] for to *cure*.[2]
For by the dial the hour they gan to mark
That Phebus southward whirled up his ark,
So high aloft that it drew to noon;
That it was time for the king to gone
Unto his meat, and enter into hall.
And then Oetes, with his lordes all,
And with his knights about him every one,
With Hercules, and also with Jasón,
Is set to meat in his royal see;
And every lord like to his degree.
But first of all, this mighty man Jason,
Assigned was by the king anon
For to sitte at his owne borde:
And Hercules, that was so great a lord,
Was sette also faste by his side.
And the marshall no longer list abide,
To assign estates where they should be:
Like as they were of high or low degree.
And after that, on scaffold high aloft,
The noise gan loud, and nothing soft,
Of trumpeters, and eke of clarioners:
And therewithal, the noble officers
Full thriftely served have the hall——
I want cunning by order to descrive

[1] [2] To arrange and *dress the tables.*

Of every course the diversities,
The strange *sewes*,[1] and the *subtleties*,[2]
That were that day served in that place, &c.

The following picture of Medea's growing passion is not inelegant:—

For as she sat at meat tho in that tide,
Her father next, and Jason by her side,
All suddenly her fresh and rosen hue
Full ofte-time gan changen and renew;
An hundred *sithes*[3] in a little space.
For now, the blood from her goodly face
Unto her heart unwarely gan *avale*:[4]
And therewithal she waxeth dead and pale.
And *eft*[5] anon (who thereto gan take heed)
Her hue returneth into goodly red:

[1] Mr. Tyrwhitt explains *sewes*, dishes; but his quotation from Gower rather proves it to mean broths, or soups, in which sense the word often occurs in ancient cookery-receipts. Sax. seawe, succus, liquor. (Lye's Dict.) Seve. Fr. The Scotch still use the word *sowens* for a sort of oatmeal broth, or flummery.

[2] These were ornaments placed on the table, and sometimes illustrated with mottos.

[3] Times.

[4] Descend. Fr.

[5] Again. Sax.

But still among, to embellish her colour,
The rose was *meynt*[1] aye with the lily flow'r;
And though the rose some deal gan to pace,
Yet still the lily bideth in his place,
Till nature made them eft again to meet.—
For now she brent, and now she gan to cold.
And aye the more she gan behold
This Jason young, the more she gan desire
To look on him; so was she set a-fire
With his beauté, and his seemliness,
And every thing she inly gan impress.
What that she saw, in mind and in thought
She all emprinteth, and forgetteth nought.
For she considereth every circumstance,
Both of his port and his governance;
His sunnish hair, crisped like golden wire,
His knightly look, and his manly cheer, &c.

The first book concludes with the destruction of Troy, by Hercules; the second relates the building of the new city by Priam, the mission of Antenor into Greece, the predatory expedition of Paris, &c. and ends with the landing of the Greeks before Troy. The third book contains the whole history of the siege till the death of Hector; the fourth relates the election of Palamedes as commander of the

[1] Mixed.

Greeks, and the deposition of Agamemnon, as also the remainder of the siege, the story of the "horse of brass," and the destruction of the city. The fifth and last book describes the miseries endured by the Greeks on their passage home, and gives the genealogy of "*Pirrhus, how his father hight* "*Peleus*," &c. In this book the poet implores the favour of his readers, assuring them that—

Though so be that they not ne read
In all this book no rethorikes newe,
Yet this I hope, THAT THEY SHALL FIND ALL TRUE.

One of the most amusing passages in this poem is contained in the 17th chapter of the second book, and relates to a well known event in the life of Venus. Lydgate thus expresses his indignation against Vulcan,—

The *smotry*[1] smith, this swarte Vulcanus,
That whilom in heart was so jealous
Toward Venus, that was his wedded wife,
Whereof there rose a deadly mortal strife,
When he with Mars gan her first espie,
Of high malice, and cruel false envy',
Through the shining of Phebus' beames bright,
Lying a-bed with Mars her owne knight.

[1] Smoky, or smutty.

For which in heart he brent as any *glede*,[1]
Making the slander all abroad to spread,
And gan thereon falsely for to muse.

And God forbid that any man accuse
FOR SO LITTLE, any woman ever!
Where love is set, hard is to dissever!
For though they do such thing of gentleness,
Pass over lightly, and bear none heaviness,
Lest that thou be to women odious!
And yet this smith, this false Vulcanus,
Albe that he had them thus espied,
Among Paynims yet was he deified!
And, for that he SO FALSELY THEM AWOKE,
I have him set last of all my book,
Among the gods of false *mawmentry*,[2] &c.

Upon this occasion, the morals of our poetical monk are so very pliant, that it is difficult to suppose him quite free from personal motives which might have influenced his doctrine. Perhaps he had been incommoded by some intrusive husband, at a

[1] A burning coal. Sax.

[2] Mahometry, *i. e.* idolatry. It may be proper to observe, that no part of this passage is to be found in Colonna's original. In general, indeed, Lydgate's is by no means a translation, but a very loose paraphrase.

moment when he felt tired of celibacy, and wished to indulge in a temporary relaxation from the severity of monastic discipline.[1]

The picture of Venus is thus curiously described,—

And she stant naked in the wavy sea,
Environ her with goddesses three,
That be assigned, with busy attendánce,
To wait on her, and do her observance.
And flowers freshe, blue, red, and white,
Be her about, the more for to delight.
And on her head she hath a chaplet
Of roses red, full pleasantly y-set,
AND FROM THE HEADE DOWN UNTO HER FOOT,
WITH SUNDRY GUMS AND OINTEMENTES SOOTE
SHE IS ENOINTE, SWEETER FOR TO SMELL.
And all aloft, as these poets tell,
Be doves white, fleeing, and eke sparrows,
And her beside, Cupid with his arrows, &c.

[Book XI. chap. 17.]

[1] Suspecting that Lydgate had borrowed this singular passage from some French paraphrase of Colonna's work, I examined the anonymous translation in the Museum (Bibl. Reg. 16. F. ix.), but could not find any traces of such a deviation from the original.

The following particulars, in the description of Fortune, are rather singular:—

And thus this lady, wilful and reckless,
As she that is froward and perverse
Hath IN HER CELLAR DRINKES FULL DIVERSE.
For she to some, of fraud and of fallace,
Minstreth piment, baum, and hypocras;
And suddenly, when the soote is past,
She of custome can give him a cast,
For to conclude falsly in the fine,
Of better *eysell*[1] and of eager wine;
And corrosives, that fret and pierce deep;
And narcoticks that cause men to sleep, &c.
[Book XI. cap. 1.]

These, it is true, are not very poetical passages, nor are we to expect from Lydgate much liveliness of fancy, or brilliancy of expression. His merit, such as it is, cannot easily be exemplified in short extracts; and is rather likely to find favour in the eyes of the antiquarian, than of the poet. By readers of the former description, the following passages, from the description of Troy, may perhaps be perused with patience.—

[1] *Aisil*, Old Fr.; vinegar. (Vide Tresor de Borel.)

And, as I read, the walles were on height
Two hundred cubits; all of marble grey,
Magecolled[1] without, for assaults, and assay;
And it to make more pleasant of delight,
Among the marble was albaster white,
Meynt in the walls ——————
And at the corner of every wall was set
A crown of gold with riche stones y-frette;
That shone full bright against the sun sheen;
And every tower *brettered*[2] was so clean
Of chose stone that were not far asunder,
That to behold it was a very wonder.
Thereto this city, compass'd environ,
Had gates six to enter into town—
With square towers set on every side:
At whose corners, of very pomp and pride,
The workmen have, with fell and stern viságes,
Of rich *entail*[3] up-raised great imáges,
Wrought out of stone, and never like to fail,
Full curiously enarmed for bataile.

[1] The *machecoulis* were the openings under the parapets of a gate, or the salient galleries of a tower, to defend the foot of the wall, by pouring down hot water or pitch, or sometimes dropping stones on the heads of the besiegers.

[2] Probably *embattled*, from the French word *bretter*, to *indent*. Cotgrave.—*Bretescher, fortifier.* Dict. Roman.

[3] Sculpture. Fr.

And through the wall their foemen for to let,
At every tower were great guns y-set,
For assaults and sudden aventures:
And on each turrets were raised up figures
Of savage beasts, as bears, and of lións,
Of tygers, boars, of serpents, and dragóns,
And harts eke with their broad horns:
Of elephants, and large unicorns,
Bugles, bulls, and many great griffón,
Forged of brass, of copper, and *laiton*,[1]
That cruelly by signes of their faces
Upon their foen made fell menáces.

Barbicans, and also bulwarks huge,
Afore the town made for high refúge,
When need should be, early and eke late;
And portcullices strong at every gate
That of assaults they neede take no charge.
And the locks thick, broad, and large,
Of all the gates well wrought of shining brass.
And eke within the mighty shutting was
Of iron bars, strong, square, and round,
And great bars pitched in the ground,
With huge chaines fitted for defence,
That ne would breake for no violence,

[1] *Latten* denotes *iron plates tinned over*. Owen's Dict. of Arts and Sciences.

That hard it was through them for to win.

And every house that builded was within,
Every palace, and every mansion,
Of marble were throughout all the town—
And if I should rehearsen by and by
The carve knots, by craft of masonry,
The fresh *enbowing*[1] with *verges*[2] *right as lines*,
And the *housing*[3] full of *backewines*,[4]
The rich *coining*,[5] the lusty tablements,
Vignettes running in casements,
Though the termes in English woulden rhyme,
To shew them all I have as now no time.—

And through the town, by crafty purveyance,
By great *avise*[6] and discreet ordinance,
By compas cast, and squared out by *squyers*[7]
Of polish'd marble, upon strong pillérs,
Devised were, long, large, and wide,
Of every street in the fronter side,
Fresh alures; with lusty high pinácles;
And, *monstring*[8] outward costly tabernacles;

[1] *Arching?*
[2 3 4 5] I do not quite understand any of these terms.
[6] *Avis*, Fr.; counsel.
[7] *Esqerre*, now spelt *equerre*, the carpenter's *square*.
[8] Exhibiting; *monstrant*. Old Fr. Colonna's original only

Vaulted above like to reclinatories;
That called were deambulatories,
[For] men to walk together, twain and twain
To keep them dry when it happed to rain.—
And every house covered was with lead,
And many *gargoile*,[1] and many hideous head,
With spouts thorough the pipes, as they ought,
From the stone-work to the kennel *raught*,[2]
Voiding filths low into the ground
Thorough grates made of iron pierced round.
The streets paved, both in length and *brede*,[3]
In chequer wise, with stones white and red, &c.[4]

After a great deal more of minute description, Lydgate tells us, that Priam built a sort of circus—

[5] To give his men *in knighthood* exercise,
Every to put other at essay
In justes, lists, and also in tournéy——

says: "In ipsarum vero lateribus platearum, innumerabiles "columnæ marmoreis arcubus circumvolutis erectæ, et super "ipsorum edificiis elevatæ."

[1] Gargouille. Fr. is the end of a spout: they are usually terminated with heads of animals.

[2] Reached. [3] Breadth.

[4] This pavement is not described in the original.

[5] Not in the original.

As also that—

There was found by clerkes full prudent
[1] Of the CHESS, the play most glorious,
Which is so subtle and so marvellous.——

And that at the same time—

——————— By great avisement
The play was found of *dice*, and *tables*,
And casting the chances decevables.

He then describes the *theatre*, in which a poet delivers from a pulpit his tragedies:—

And while that he in the pulpit stood,
With deadly face all devoid of blood,
Amid the theatre shrouded in a tent,
There came out men, gastful of their cheers,
Disfigured their faces with viseres,
[2] *Playing by signs in the people's sight*, &c.

And after defining comedy and tragedy, proceeds to tell us, that Priam was—

[1] Ibi primo ad inventa fuerunt *scaccorum solatia curiosa:* ibi ludi subito irascibiles *alearum;* hic repentina damna et lucra momentanea *taxillorum*.

[2] Not in the original.

——————— Inwardly fervent,
If so he might among his workes all
Do build a palace, and a riche hall,
Which shoulde be his *chose chief dungeon*,[1]
His royal see, and sovereign mansion.
And when he gan to his work approach,
He made it build high upon a roche
It for to assure in its foundation,
And called it the noble Ilion.—
And high amidst this noble Ilion,
So rich and passing of foundation,
Which clerks yet in their bookes praise,
King Priam made an hall for to raise.——
And, of this hall farther to define,
With stones square by level and by line
It paved was; with full great diligence
Of masonry, and passing excellence,
And all above raised was a see,
Full curiously of stones and *perree*,[2]
That called was, as chief and principál
Of the *reign*,[3] the seat most royál.
Tofore which was set, by great delight,
A *board*[4] of ebon and of ivory white;

[1] Pro suæ habitationis hospitio.
[2] *Pierreries*, jewels. Fr. [3] Kingdom.
[4] Table.

So egally y-joined, and so clean,
That in the work there was no *rift*[1] y-seen:
And *sessions*[2] were made on every side
Only the estates by order to divide.
Eke, in the hall, as it was convenable,
On each partie was a *dormant*[3] table,
Of ivory eke, and of this ebon tree, &c.

The bounds of the present sketch will not permit a farther accumulation of extracts from this obsolete poem: in which, however, the inquisitive reader will find much curious information; though he will not discover such poetical beauties, as can justify its original popularity. That popularity was, indeed, excessive and unbounded; and it continued without much diminution during, at least, two centuries. To this the praises of succeeding writers bear ample testimony; but it is confirmed by a direct and most singular evidence.

[1] Fissure. [2] Seats.

[3] *Fixed ready.* Tyrwhitt. In Chaucer's prologue, the Frankelein's table,

——— "*Dormant in his hall alway,*
"*Stood ready covered all the longe day.*"

Perhaps the common tables resembled those still in use in France, which consist of a few boards nailed together, and placed (when wanted for use) on folding tressells; so that the different parts may be separately removed.

An anonymous writer has taken the pains to modernize the whole poem, consisting of about 28000 verses; to change the ancient context, and almost every rhyme, and to throw the whole into six-line stanzas: and yet, so little was he solicitous to raise his own reputation at the expence of the original author, that though he has altered the title and preface of the work, he has still ascribed it to Lydgate. This strange instance of perverted talents and industry, was published under the title of "*the* "*Life and Death of Hector*," by Thomas Purfoot, 1614, and is well known to the booksellers.

The date of Lydgate's death is doubtful; at least it is stated differently by different authors. In his Philomela he mentions the decease of an earl of Warwick, who died in 1446, so that he must have survived that year. Some authorities place his death in 1461, and this date is not improbable.

CHAPTER XII.

Reign of Henry V. continued.—James I. King of Scotland—Extract from the "King's Quair."

WE are probably indebted to an accident, which happened in the reign of Henry IV. for the most elegant poem that was produced during the early part of the fifteenth century: it is called the KING'S QUAIR,* and was written by James I. king of Scotland.

This Prince was the second son of Robert III. and was born in 1395. His elder bother, David, having disgraced himself by the general profligacy of his conduct, was confined, by his father's order, in the palace of Falkland, where he died of a dysentery, in 1401; or, as was more generally believed, was starved to death, by order of his uncle, the duke of Albany, to whom Robert had entrusted the administration of the kingdom. After the death of this prince, the king determined to send his surviving son, James, to be educated at the court of his ally, Charles VI. king of France; and

* Cahier, Fr.; whence quire.

James embarked for that country, with his governor the earl of Orkney, and a numerous train of attendants: but the ship was stopped, on the 12th of April, 1405, off Flamborough-Head, by an English squadron, and the passengers were, by order of Henry IV. sent as prisoners to London.

This happened about a week before the termination of a truce; and though such infractions of treaties, were very common during the barbarous warfare, which was at that time carried on between England and Scotland, the capture and subsequent detention of James, were attributed to the intrigues of the duke of Albany, who, in consequence of the death of king Robert, in the following year, was nominated regent of Scotland; and who, by means of the king's long detention in England, not only preserved that dignity, to the end of his life, but quietly transmitted it to his son Murdoch earl of Fife.

That Henry had no right to consider as a prisoner, the sovereign of an independent nation, whom an act of insolent violence, had placed within his power, is perfectly evident: but the accident was perhaps ultimately advantageous to the prince himself, as well as to the nation, which he was born to govern. He was at this time only ten years of age; and Henry, though he treated him with

rigour, and even kept him confined for two years in the Tower, took the greatest care of his education, and appointed, as his governor, Sir John Pelham, a man of worth and learning, under whose tuition he made so rapid a progress, that he soon became a prodigy of talents and accomplishments. His character, as drawn by the historians of that age, is such as we seldom see realized. We are assured, that he became a proficient in every branch of polite literature; in grammar, oratory, Latin and English poetry, music, jurisprudence, and the philosophy of the times: and that his dexterity in tilts and tournaments, in wrestling, in archery, and in the sports of the field, was perfectly unrivalled.

It might be objected, that those who possess only a part of these accomplishments, are apt to gain credit for all the rest; that the owner of a crown is seldom judged with severity; that unmerited misfortune is sure to excite sympathy and commiseration; and that as James united all these claims to popular favour, some parts of the preceding description, are likely to have been somewhat exaggerated. But the excellent laws which he enacted after his return to Scotland, and the happiness which his people enjoyed in consequence of his policy, his firmness, and his justice, bear the most unequivocal testimony to the truth of one

part of the picture; and his poetical remains are sufficient to evince, that his literary talents were not over-rated by his contemporaries.

During fifteen years of his captivity, he seemed forgotten, or at least neglected, by his subjects. The admiration of strangers, and the consciousness of his own talents, only rendered his situation more irksome; and he had begun to abandon himself to despair, when he was fortunately consoled, for his seclusion at Windsor castle, by a passion of which sovereigns, in quiet possession of a throne, have seldom the good fortune to feel the influence. The object of his adoration was the lady Jane Beaufort (daughter of John Beaufort duke of Somerset, and grand-daughter of John of Gaunt), whom he afterwards married, and in whose commendation he composed his principal poetical work, called the King's Quair.

This poem, consisting of 197 stanzas, divided into six cantos, has much allegorical machinery, which was apparently suggested to him by the study of Boethius, the favourite author of the time; but it also contains various particulars of his life; it is full of simplicity and feeling, and is not inferior, in poetical merit, to any similar production of Chaucer. The following extract is taken from the second canto, in which no allego-

rical painting is introduced, and which contains little more, than an account of his own adventures.

X.

The longe dayes and the nightis eke
  I would bewail my fortune in this wise;
For which, against distress comfórt to seek,
  My custom was on mornis for to rise
  Early as day: O happy exercise!
By thee come I to joy out of torment:—
But now to purpose of my first entent.

XI.

Bewailing in my chamber thus alone,
  Despaired of all joy and remedy,
For-tired of my thought, and woe-begone,
  Unto the window gan I walk *in hie;*
  To see the world and folk that went forby;
As, for the time, (though I of mirthis food
Might have no more) to look it did me good.

XII.

Now was there made, fast by the touris wall,
  A garden fair;[1] and in the corners set

[1] The gardens of this period seem to have been very small. In Chaucer's Troilus and Cressida, we find the same place indifferently called a *garden* and a *yard;* and this

An *arbor* green: with wands long and small
Raised round, and so with leaves set
Was all the place, and newborn sedges among,
That *he* [1] was lone [2] walking there forby,
That might within scarce any wight espie.—

XLV.

And in the smale greene twistis set
The little sweete nightingale, and sung
So loud and clear the hymnis consecrate
Of luve's use, now soft, now loud among,
That all the gardens and the wallis rung
Right of their sing: *and on the couple next* [3]
Of their sweet harmony: and on the text

at Windsor, that is, the Queen's hall, was probably either in the part or in the terrace.

" Adonis the faire sonne of Cyprus, for that he were
" Lord *of gardens*, &c.—
" This *gerle* was large, and railed all the aleyes,
" And shadowed was with blossomy boughis green;
" And seented new, and indeed all the ways,
" In which he walked," &c.—

Troilus and Cress. Book II. l. 813, &c.

[1] Probably an arbour, though the word is also very frequently used for an *herbary*, or garden of simples.

[2] Living person.

[3] Mr. Tyrler imagines that this relates to the pairing of the birds: but the word *couple* seems here to be used as a musical term.

XV.

" Worshippe ye that lovers be this May,
" For of your bliss the calends are begun:
" And sing with us, away! winter away!
"Come summer, come! the sweet seasón and sun!
"Awake, for shame! that have your heavens won!
" And amorously lift up your headis all;
" Thank love, that list you to his mercy call!"

XVI.

When they this song had sung a *little throw*[1]
They *stent*[2] awhile, and therewith unafraid,
As I beheld, and cast mine eyen a-lowe,
From bough to bough they *hipped*[3] and they play'd,
And freshly, in their birdis kind, array'd
Their feathers new, and *frit*[4] them in the sun,
And thanked love that had their *makis*[5] won.

These, and a few more stanzas, are preparatory to the appearance of his mistress, his first sight of whom is thus described.

XXI.

And therewith cast I down mine eye again,
Whereas I saw, walking under the tow'r,

[1] A little time. [2] Stopped, [3] Hopped.
[4] Pecked. [5] Mates.

Full secretly, new comen *her to pleyne*,[1]
  The fairest or the freshest younge flow'r
  That ever I saw, methought, before that hour;
For which sudden abate, anon *astert*[2]
The blood of all my body to my heart.

XXII.

And though I stood abased tho a *lite*,[3]
  No wonder was; for why? my wittis all
Were so overcome with pleasance and delight,
  Only through letting of mine eyen fall,
  That suddenly my heart became her thrall
For ever; of free will; for of menáce
There was no token in her sweete face.

XXIII.

And in my head I drew right hastily;
  And [then] eft-soons I lean'd it out again:
And saw her walk that very womanly,
  With no wight mo but only women twain.
  Then gan I study with myself, and sayn,
" Ah sweet, are ye a worldly creatúre,
" Or heavenly thing in likeness of nature?

[1] This seems to mean *complain*, but should it not rather be *playen*, to play or sport?

[2] Started back.

[3] A little.

XXIV.

" Or are ye god Cupidis own princéss?
" And comen are to loose me out of band.
" Or are ye very nature the goddèss,
" That have depainted with your heavenly hand
" This garden full of flowers as they stand?
" What shall I think, alas! what reverence
" Shall I mestér unto your excellence?

XXV.

" Giff ye a goddess be, and that ye like
" To do me pain, I may it not astart;
" Giff ye be worldly wight, that doth me sike,
" Why list God make you so, my dearest heart,
" To do a silly prisoner thus smart,
" That loves you all, and wots of nought but wo:
" And, therefore, mercy sweet! sen it is so."

The dress and figure of his mistress are minutely painted as follows:—

XXVII.

Of her array the form if I shall write,
Toward her golden hair and rich attire,
In fret-wise couched with pearlis white,
And greate *balas*[1] *lemyng*[2] as the fire,

[1] A sort of precious stones (says Urry) brought from

With many an emerald and fair saphire,
And, on her head a chaplet fresh of hue,
Of plumis, parted red, and white, and blue,

XXVIII.

Full of quaking spangles bright as gold,
Forged of shape like to the amourettes;
So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold;
The plumis eke like to the *flour-jonnettis*,[1]
And other of shape like to the *flour-jonettis*;[2]
And above all this, there was, well I wote,
Beauty enough to make a world to dote!

XXIX.

About her neck, white as the fair *émail*,[3]
A goodly chain of small *orfevrerie*;[4]
Whereby there hang a ruby without fail,
Like to an heart y-shapen verily,
That as a spark of *lowe*,[5] so wantonly

Balassia, in India. Tyrwhitt says, the *balais*, Fr. is *a sort of bastard ruby.* [5] Shining.

[1] Probably the *fleur de genêt*, *(genista)* broom.

[2] The repetition of this word is apparently a mistake of the original transcriber.

[3] Fr. Enamel.

[4] Fr. Goldsmith's-work.

[5] Fire. (Ruddiman's Glossary.)

Seemed burning upon her whité throat:
Now gif there was good party, God it wot.

XXX.

And for to walk, that freshe Maye's morrow,
An hook she had upon her tissue white,
That goodlier had not been seen *to-forrow*,[1]
As I suppose; and girt she was a *lite*;[2]
Thus *halfling*[3] loose for haste, to such delight
It was to see her youth in goodlihead,
That, for rudeness, to speak thereof I dread.

XXXI.

In her was youth, beauty, with humble aport,
Bounty, richesse, and womanly feature;
God better wrote than my pen can report:
Wisdom, largess, estate, and cunning sure,
In every point so guided her measure,
In word, in deed, in shape, in countenance,
That nature might no more her child avance.

It would, perhaps, be difficult to select, even from Chaucer's most finished works, a long specimen of descriptive poetry so uniformly elegant as this: indeed some of the verses are so highly finished, that they would not disfigure the compo-

[1] Before. [2] A little. [3] Half.

sitions of Dryden, Pope, or Gray. Nor was King James's talent confined to serious and pathetic compositions. Two poems of a ludicrous cast, and which have been the constant favourites of the Scotish people to the present day, are now universally attributed to this monarch. These are "*Christ's Kirk on the Green*," and "*Peblis on the Play*;" the first composed in the northern, and the second, in the southern dialect of Scotland. A third, called "*Falkland on the Green*," which Mr. Pinkerton supposes to have described the popular sports of the central district of the kingdom, and to have been written in the Fifeshire dialect, has hitherto eluded the researches of antiquaries. In Mr. Pinkerton's "Ancient Scotish Poems," (London, 1786), is found a "*Song on Absence*," which the editor suspects to be the same which is described by *Major*, as beginning with the words "*y ás scn*," &c.

Of the *King's Quair* only one MS. is known to exist: it is a small folio, in the Bodleian library, (Seld. Archiv. B. xxiv.) Mr. Tytler, having procured a transcript of this MS. published it at Edinburgh, 1783, together with "*Christ's Kirk on the Green*," under the title of "Poetical Remains of James I.:" the work is illustrated with copious notes, and with two dissertations; the first on the

life and writings of the author, and the second on Scotish music.

A strange fatality seems to have attended the literature of this period. It has been just observed, that King James's work has been lately recovered by the casual preservation of a single manuscript. His contemporary, Charles duke of Orleans, father of Louis XII. is still very imperfectly known to the public, by means of some short specimens of his poetry, given in the *Annales Poetiques* (Paris, 1778), and of a few more published in M. de Paulmy's *Mélanges d'une grande Bibliotheque.*

It is singular enough, that the two best poets of the age; both of royal blood; both prisoners at the same court; both distinguished by their military as well as literary talents; both admired during their lives, and regretted after death, as the brightest ornaments of their respective nations; should have been forgotten by the world during more than three centuries, and at length restored to their reputation at the same period. The duke of Orleans, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt, acquired such a proficiency in our language, during a stay of twenty years in this country, as to write several small pieces of English poetry, which are said to be still preserved in MS. in the Royal Library at Paris. These may possibly not

be worth transcribing;* but whatever be their poetical merit, they may fairly be adduced as a

* Mr. Ritson has inserted (page 49 of his Dissertation on Ancient Songs and Music, London, 1790) a specimen of this prince's English poetry, copied from No. 682 of the Harleian MSS. It is a dialogue between a lover and his mistress, but being founded on a strange sort of pun or play on words, it is very obscure, and apparently not worth unriddling.

Another MS. in the Museum (Bibl. Reg. 16. F. ii), solely consisting of poems by the Duke of Orleans, affords three specimens of his attempts at English poetry; and, as they are very short, and never were printed, I shall here subjoin them all, in their original orthography.

CHANÇON I.

Ne were[1] my trewe innocent hert,
How ye hold, with her, aliaúns,
That, somtym, with word of plésaúns,
Daceyved you under covért.
Thynke how the stroke of love com smért,
Without warnyng or *deffiaúns*.[2]
Ne were, &c.
And[3] ye shal, pryvely or appert,
See her by me in Love's dauns,
With her faire feminyn contenauns,
Ye shal never fro her astert!
Ne were, &c.

[1] Query, if a mistake of the transcriber, for *beware?* or, perhaps, for *nay! 'ware.*
[2] Mistrust. Fr. [3] An if.

proof that our language had, at this time, acquired some estimation in the eyes of foreigners.

CHANÇON II.

My hertly love is in your governaúns,
And ever shal, whill that I lyve may;
I pray to God I may see that day
That we be knyt with truthful alyauns,
Ye shal not fynd feyning or variauns,
As in[1] my part: that wyl I trewly say,
My hertly, &c.

CHANÇON III.

Go forth my hert! with my lady:
Loke that ye spar no *bysynes*,[2]
To serve her with such *lolynes*[3]
(*That*[4] ye gette her *oftyme*[5] pryvely)
That she kepe truly her promés.
Go forth, &c.
Iniust as a helis body[6]
Abyde alone in hevynes:
And ye shall dwell with your mastres
In plaisauns, glad and mery.
Go forth, &c.

The MS. from which the foregoing extracts were made, contains some illuminations of exquisite beauty. One of these represents the duke, in the white tower, writing, and

[1] On. [2] Care, attention. [3] Lowliness.
[4] If that? [5] At any time?
[6] I cannot understand the word *iniust*; perhaps it means *exactly*. *Helis* is perhaps *hele-less*, *i. e.* unhealthy, diseased.

It has been observed, that King James is represented to have been a complete master of music: this art, indeed, was considered, perhaps from some indistinct notion of its effects, in humanizing the savage inhabitants of the earth, as a part of education, not only essential to the accomplished knight, but to the sovereign and legislator; and as closely connected with every branch of learning, whether abstract or political. In Pierce Ploughman, Science says,

Logic I learned her, and many other laws,
And *all the unisons in musick* I made her to know.

Fordun, in his Scoti Chronicon, has employed a whole chapter in describing James's uncommon excellence in the art; and Mr. Tytler, combining this testimony, with a very curious passage in the works of *Alessandro Tassoni*, has inferred, that James I. was the "reformer, if not the inventor of "the Scotish songs, or vocal music." By this he means, not that the peculiar *melody* of Scotish airs, took its rise in the fifteenth century, but that James I. adapted it to modern *harmony*, and

attended by guards: at a distance is London bridge, with the houses and chapel built upon it; and the latter building is so minutely drawn, as to afford a very good idea of what it really was. The MS. was written for the use of Henry VI.

introduced it into regular composition, by which means, it became known to the musical professors of Italy and the rest of Europe. Mr. Pinkerton, on the contrary, is of opinion that the "*Giacomo*, "*Re di Scozia*," mentioned by Tassoni, is not the *first* but the *fifth* king of that name. The reader must decide between them.

After the death of the duke of Albany, the incapacity of his successor, induced the Scotish nobility to enter into serious negotiation for the liberty of their captive sovereign; who, after agreeing to pay a heavy ransom for his freedom, was married, in 1424, to his beloved mistress, and at the same time restored to his kingdom. In 1437 he was assassinated at Perth, after a reign of twelve years, equally honourable to himself, and beneficial to his people.

CHAPTER XIII.

Reign of Henry VI.—Digression on the private Life of the English.

THAT we may not be encumbered by the accumulation of our materials, it is obviously necessary to take some opportunity of reviewing those which we have collected; of comparing them with such descriptions of national manners as are furnished by our professed historians; and of connecting them with such farther particulars, as are to be gleaned from sources of incidental information. For this necessary digression, there is no period more convenient than that on which we are now entering; because the interval between the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VIII. which comprehends near a century, although uncommonly rich in Scotch poets of distinguished excellence, does not furnish us with *a single name among the natives of England deserving of much notice.* Our survey must, of course, be very rapid, and rather desultory, but it will, at least, break the monotony of the narrative, and preclude, for the future, the necessity of introducing many detached observa-

tions, which, when our extracts become more amusing, would prove a disagreeable interruption to the reader.

To begin with the lower classes of society.

It is generally agreed, that before the Norman conquest, and for a long time after, nearly all the lands of the kingdom, were cultivated by serfs, whose situation was, in many respects, scarcely distinguishable from absolute slavery. It may, however, be inferred from the very curious extract already quoted from Pierce Ploughman, that about the middle of the fourteenth century, and probably much earlier, the labouring poor, though still serfs with respect to their feudal lords, were perfectly free, with respect to their immediate employers. The poet says,—

"Labourers that have no land to live on, but their hands—
"But if they be HIGHLY HIRED else will they chide."

During a great part of the year, indeed, they were glad to work for a mere subsistence, but when provisions were plentiful, they could only be induced to work at all, by the temptation of excessive wages. Against this indolence, the author inveighs with great vehemence; but his remonstrances were

probably ineffectual, because a stupid insensibility, and a heedless profusion, are the natural characteristics of an oppressed and degraded people.

Besides, their conduct seems to have arisen, in some measure, from the imperfect state of agriculture. Animal food formed a considerable part of the support of the people; but as the whole of the manure was used on the arable lands, and it was impossible that large numbers of cattle could subsist, during the cold season on the natural pastures, they were slaughtered and salted in autumn for a winter provision. This is a reason adduced by Sir John Fortescue for rejecting the gabelle or salt-tax, as a source of revenue for England. "In France "(says he) the people salten but little meat, except "their bacon, and therefore would buy little salt; "but yet they be artyd *(compelled)* to buy more "salt than they would.—This rule and order would "be sore abhorred in England, as well by the "merchants, that be wonted to have their freedom "in buying and selling of salt, as by the people, "that usen much more to salt their meats than "do the French men." (Fortescue on Monarchy, Cap. X.)

But it appears that, partly from the improvidence usual to a barbarous state of society, and partly from the want of those internal means

of communication, which tend to diffuse general abundance, these stores of animal food, as well as the grain, were often consumed before the reproduction of a fresh stock. Hence, in the above-mentioned extracts from Pierce Ploughman, the poor are represented as reduced to "loaves of "beans and bran," and to "feed hunger with "beans and baken apples, chyboles and charvell," until the return of harvest again enabled them to waste their time in idleness and profusion.

Even the farmers themselves, the order to which Pierce the Ploughman apparently belonged, do not seem to have fared very sumptuously, during some part of the year; for he declares, that his whole provision consists in "two green cheeses, some curds and cream, and an oat-cake:" but he adds, that "after Lammas, he may dight his dinner" as he likes. The particulars of his wealth are, a cow and calf, and a cart-mare, which he keeps for the purpose of carrying manure upon his land. These articles, perhaps, were designed to give an exact statement of his condition in society; for they seem to agree with what Sir John Fortescue considers, as sufficient for the maintenance of a yeoman.

It is very honourable to the good sense of the English nation, that our two best early poets, Chaucer, and the author of Pierce Ploughman,

have highly extolled this useful body of men, while the French minstrels of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, universally seem to approve, the supercilious contempt, with which the nobles affected to treat them. The absurd prejudices of chivalry on this subject are not ill expressed by Lydgate, where he makes Achilles express his apprehension that,—

In this rage furious and wood,
Full likely is that all the noble blood
Throughout this worlde shall destroyed be;
And rural folk, (and that were great pity)
Shall have lordship, and wholly governance:
And churlis eke, with sorrow and mischance,
In every land shall lordis be alone,
When gentlemen shall slayen be each one.

There is a curious chapter in Sir John Fortescue's Treatise *de Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, which seems to prove that the smaller landholders in England usually enjoyed more comforts than, from the general language of historians, we should be led to imagine; for he asserts, that "there is scarce a "small village in which you may not find a *knight*, "an *esquire*, or some substantial *householder*, com-"monly called a *Fankleyne*, *all* men of considerable "estates: there are others who are called *free-*

" *holders*, and many *yeomen* of estates sufficient to " make a substantial jury." (Chap. XXIX.) This wealth he attributes principally to the inclosure of our pasture-lands.

The same writer thus describes the comparative poverty of the French common people: " The same " commons be so impoverished and destroyed, that " they may unneth (*scarcely*) live. They drink " water; they eat apples, with bread right brown, " made of rye. They eat no flesh, but if it be " seldom a little lard, or of the entrails or heads of " beasts slain for the nobles and merchants of the " land. They wearen no woollen, but if it be a " poor coat under their outermost garment, made " of great canvass, and call it a frock. Their hosen " be of like canvass, and passen not their knee, " wherefore they be gartered, and their thighs bare. " Their wives and children gon barefoot; they " may in none other wise live. For some of them " that was wont to pay to his lord for his tenement, " which he hireth by the year, a scute, *(a crown)* " payeth now to the king, over that scute, five " scutes. Wherethrough they be artyd *(compelled)* " by necessity so to watch, labour, and grub in the " ground for their sustenance, that their nature is " much wasted, and the kind of them brought to " nought. They gon crooked, and are feeble, not

"able to fight, &c." (Fortescue on Monarchy; Chap. III.)

But though the lower orders of people in England were so advantageously distinguished from those of other nations, by a superiority in food and clothing, their domestic buildings seem to have been much inferior to those on the continent; and this inferiority continued even down to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as appears from the confession of Harrison.

"In old time (says he) the houses of the Britons "were slightly set up with a few posts, and many "raddles, (*kurdles*) with stable and all offices under "one roof; the like whereof almost is to be seen "in the fenny countries and northern parts, unto "this day, where, for lack of wood, they are en-"forced to continue this ancient manner of building. "So in the open and champain countries, they are "enforced, for want of stuff, to use no *studs** at "all, but only frank-posts, and such principals; "with here and there a girding, whereunto they "fasten their splints or raddles, and then cast it all "over with thick clay, to keep out the wind, which "otherwise would annoy them. Certes, this rude "kind of building made the Spaniards, in Queen "Mary's days, to wonder, but chiefly when they

* The upright beams. Sax.

" saw what large diet was used in many of these " so homely cottages; insomuch, that one of no " small reputation amongst them, said after this " manner: 'These English, quoth he, have their " houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare " commonly so well as the king." (Harrison's Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed, p. 187.)

We have already seen that glazed windows* are always mentioned by our early poets, with an air of affectation which evinces their rarity; so that we are not surprised at being told that the yeomen and farmers were perfectly contented with windows of lattice. Rooms provided with chimnies are also noticed, as a luxury, by the author of Pierce Ploughman; but it is difficult to read with gravity, the sagacious observations of Harrison, on the ill consequences attending the enjoyment of warmth, without the risk of suffocation " Now (says he) have " we many chimnies, and yet our tenderlings com- " plain of rheums, catarrhs, and poses, *(colds in " the head.)* Then had we none but REREDOSSES,†

* Anderson (History of Commerce, Vol. I. p. 90, edit. 1764) says, that they were first introduced into England A. D. 1180.

† Reredosses; this word is sometimes used to express some *part* of a chimney, and sometimes as a substitute for

"and our heads did never ache. For as the smoke "in those days was supposed to be a sufficient "hardening for the timber of the house, so it was "reputed a far better medicine to keep the good "man and his family from the *quacke* (*ague?*) or "*pose;* wherewith, as then, very few were oft ac-"quainted." (Description of England, p. 212.)

After witnessing the indignation which this author has vented against the *tenderlings* of his time, the reader may possibly learn with some surprise, that from the latter end of the thirteenth, to near the sixteenth century, persons of all ranks, and of both sexes, were universally in the habit of sleeping quite naked. This custom is often alluded to by Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and all our ancient writers. In the "Squire of Low Degree," there is a curious instance,—

——— she rose, that lady dere,
To take her leave of that squyere
All so naked as she was born,
She stood her chamber door beforn.

In the "Aresta Amorum," a lady who had stipulated to throw a nosegay to her lover, on a particular night on each week, complains of the

one. It seems to mean a plate of iron, or perhaps a coating of brick, to enable the wall to resist the flame.

difficulty she found in escaping to the window, "où par fois etoit *toute nue* par l' espace de deux "grosses heures." This strange practice prevailed at a time when the day-dress of both sexes was much warmer than at present; being generally bordered, and often lined, with furs; insomuch that numberless warrens were established in the neighbourhood of London, for the purpose of supplying its inhabitants with rabbets' skins.

Perhaps it was this warmth of clothing that enabled our ancestors, in defiance of a northern climate, to serenade their mistresses with as much perseverance, as if they had lived under the torrid zone. Chaucer thought he had given us the date of his *dream* with sufficient exactness, when he described it as happening

> About such hour as lovers weep
> And cry after their ladies grace.

In France, as appears from the work already quoted, the lovers were sometimes bound to conduct "les tabourins et les *bas* menestriers," to the doors of their mistresses, between midnight and day-break, on every festival throughout the year; though the principal season for such gallantry was the beginning of May, when the windows were ornamented with pots of marjoram, and may-poles

hung with garlands carried through the streets, and raised before every door in succession. This was called, " reveiller les pots de mariolaine," and " planter le mai." The same season appears to have been chosen by English lovers, for the purpose of " crying after their ladies grace."

In houses, of which the walls were made of clay, and the floors of the same materials, and where the stabling was under the same roof with the dwelling rooms, the furniture was not likely to be costly. Of this the author, just quoted, received, from some ancient neighbours, the following description: " Our fathers, (yea and we ourselves), " have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough " mats, covered only with a sheet, under coverlets " maid of *dagswain*, or *hopharlots*,* (I use their " own terms) and a good round log under their " heads, instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were " so that our fathers, or the good man of the house, " had, within seven years after his marriage, pur- " chased a mattress or flock bed, and thereto a " sack of chaff to rest his head upon, he thought " himself to be as well lodged as the lord of the

* ðaȝ. Sax. (from whence *daggle* or *draggle*), any thing pendent, a *shred*. The term therefore seems to mean any *patched materials*, like those worn by the poorest country people.

" town; who, peradventure, lay seldom in a bed
" of down or whole feathers. As for servants, if
" they had any sheet above them, it was well; for
" seldom had they any under their bodies, to keep
" them from the pricking straws that ran oft through
" the canvas of the pallet, and rased their hardened
" hides." (p. 188.)

The progress of improvement in building, was from clay to lath and plaster, which was formed into panels between the principal timbers: to floors or *pargets* (as Harrison calls them, i. e. *parquets*), coated with plaster of Paris; and to ceilings overlaid with mortar, and washed with lime or plaister "of delectable whiteness." Country houses were generally covered with shingles; but in towns, the danger of fires obliged the inhabitants to adopt the use of tile or slate. These latter buildings were very solid, and consisted of many stories projecting over each other, so that the windows, on opposite sides of the street, nearly met. " The
" walls of our houses on the inner sides (says Har-
" rison), be either hanged with tapestry, arras-work,
" or painted cloths, wherein either divers histories,
" or herbs, beasts, knots, and such like, are stained,
" or else they are seeled with oak of our own, or
" wainscot brought out of the east countries."
This relates, of course, to the houses of the wealthy,

which he also represents as abounding in plate and pewter. In earlier times, wooden platters, bowls, and drinking vessels were universally used, excepting in the houses of the nobles. In France, if we may believe M. de Paumy, (Vie privée des François) slices of bread, called "Pains Tranchoirs," were used as a substitute for plates, till the reign of Louis XII.

Though our readers are not likely to be much enamoured with Lydgate's poetry, they will perhaps pardon the following extract from his "London "Lyckpenny,"* (Harl. MSS. 376.) in favour of some curious particulars which it contains respecting the city of London. The entire poem is to be found in Mr. Strutt's View of Manners, &c. Vol. III. p. 59, &c.; in which, however, there are some trifling errors. Lydgate supposes himself to have come to town in search of legal redress for some wrong, and to have visited successively the king's bench, the court of common pleas, the court of chancery, and Westminster hall.

* "Some call London a *Lyck-penny*, (as Paris is called, by "some, a pick-purse) because of feastings, with other occa-"sions of expence and allurements, which cause so many "unthrifts, among country gentlemen and others, who flock "unto her in such excessive multitudes." Howel's Londinopolis, p. 406.

Within the hall, neither rich, nor yet poor
  Would do for me aught, although I should die:
Which seeing, I gat me out of the door,
  Where Flemings began on me for to cry,
  "Master, what will you *copen*[1] or buy?
"Fine felt hats? or spectacles to read?
"Lay down your silver, and here you may speed."

Then to Westminster gate I presently went,
  When the sun it was at high prime:
And cooks to me they took good *intent*,[2]
  And proffered me bread, with ale, and wine,
  Ribs of beef, both fat and full fine,
A fair cloth they gan for to spread,
But, wanting money, I might not be sped.

Then unto London I did me hie,
  Of all the land it beareth the price;
"Hot peascods!" one began to cry,
  "Strawberry ripe, and cherries *in the rise*!"[3]
  One bade me draw near and buy some spice,
Pepper, and saffron they gan me bid,
But, for lack of money, I might not speed.

[1] *Koopen.* Flem. is to buy.
[2] Took notice, paid attention.
[3] On the twig.

Then to the Cheap I gan me drawn,
  Where much people I saw for to stand;
One offered me velvet, silk and lawn,
  Another he taketh me by the hand,
  "Here is Paris thread, the finest in the land!"
I never was used to such things, indeed;
And, wanting money, I might not speed.

Then went I forth by *London Stone*,[1]
  Throughout all *Canwyke* street:
Drapers much cloth me offered anon;
  Then comes me one cried "hot sheep's feet"
  One cried mackrell, *rysses green*,[2] another gan
    greet,[3]
One bade me buy a hood to cover my head,
But, for want of money I might not be sped.

Then I hied me unto East-Cheap,
  One cries ribs of beef, and many a pie;
Pewter pots they clattered on a heap;
  There was harp, pipe, and minstrally,
  Yea by cock! nay by cock! some began cry;

[1] A fragment of London stone is still preserved in Cannon-street, formerly called Canwick, or Candlewick-street: Stowe, in his account of Candlewick Ward, refers to this ballad.

[2] Green rushes. [3] Cry.

Some sang of Jenkin and Julian for their meed;
But, for lack of money, I might not speed.

Then into Cornhill anon I *yode*,
  Where was much stolen gear; among
I saw where hung mine owne hood,
  That I had lost among the throng;
  To buy my own hood I thought it wrong:
I knew it, well as I did my creed;
But, for lack of money, I could not speed.

The taverner took me by the sleeve,
  " Sir," saith he, " will you our wine assay?"
I answered, " that can not much me grieve,
  " A penny can do no more than it may;"
  I drank a pint, and for it did pay;
Yet, sore a-hunger'd from thence I yede,
And, wanting money, I could not speed, &c.

Lydgate has here ridiculed, with more pleasantry than usually belongs to him, the importunate civility of the lower tradesmen. The attraction of customers seems to have been, by the more opulent shop-keepers, assigned to their apprentices; for *Perlin*, a French physician who visited England in the reign of Edward VI. says, " Vous " verrez à Londres des Apprentifs avec des robes

" contre leurs boutiques, nuds têtes, et contre les " murailles de leurs maisons; tellement, qu'en pas- " sant parmi les rues, vous en trouverez cinquante " ou soixante contre les murailles, *comme idoles*, " ayant leurs bonnets à la main." He seems to have been much surprised at our shops, which he says are *always open, like those of the barbers in France, and have glass windows, generally adorned with pots of flowers;* but he particularly notices the wealth of the tavern-keepers, and the neatness of their rooms; for he says, " aux tavernes (vous " verrez) force foin dessus les planchers de bois,*

* Erasmus, in a letter to Franciscus, Wolsey's physician, ascribes the plague (then very common in England), and the sweating sickness, to the sluttishness which this custom tended to perpetuate. " The floors," says he, " are com- " monly of clay, strewed with rushes; under which lies " unmolested a putrid mixture of beer, stinking fragments of " food, and all sorts of nastiness." He also censures the filth of our streets, and even the construction of our houses, the rooms of which ought to have, as he thinks, some windows in every direction. He farther complains, that these windows, though they excluded the wind, admitted unwholesome currents of air. To explain this part of his letter, which is rather obscure, it may be proper to observe, that the illuminations in many MSS. represent the windows as composed of three compartments, of which the lowest consisted of a close lattice-work, the upper of glass, while the central compartment

"et force oreillers et tapisseries sur lesquels les "voyageurs se assisent *(asseyent)*." This practice of spreading hay, or rushes, on the floors, seems to have been, at least coeval with the arrival of the Normans. Carpets,* though introduced as early as the Crusades, were hitherto only used as coverings for chairs, or for tables, particularly for side-boards, or (as our ancestors called them) *cup-bordes*,† on which their plate or pewter was exhibited.

The stately castles of our nobility do not require any description here; because, having been intended for the purpose of resisting the attacks of an enemy, they were constructed with such solidity

was quite open. Two-thirds only of these windows were usually closed with shutters, the upper part being left for the admission of light. Such a partial shelter could not so totally exclude the air, as to satisfy such an invalid as Erasmus. (See Jortin's Life of Erasmus, Vol. II. p. 341.)

* Gilt and painted leather, being often applied to the same purposes as a carpet, was frequently called by the same name. Among the goods belonging to Henry V. and sold to pay his debts, were some "carpetz de cuir," valued at 3*s*. 4*d*. the piece. (Rolls of Parl. A. D. 1423.)

† In the inventory of furniture belonging to the bedchamber of Henry VIII. at Hampton Court, were two *joined-cupbords*; item, one *joined-stool*, &c. (Strutt's Manners, &c. Vol. III. p. 69.)

as to survive the depredations of time; and are, in some instances, preserved to the present day, with little alteration in their external appearance. Their interior furniture, indeed, was of a more perishable nature; but a few oaken benches and tables, raised on strong tressels, and sometimes morticed into the floor, and sometimes with folding legs, a bed, a pair of andirons, or dogs, with their accompaniment of tongs, or a " chafer," (chafing-dish), generally formed the whole inventory of the best furnished apartment.

When we consider our great feudal barons, inhabiting their solitary "*dungeons*," without the use of letters, or the comforts of that mixed society which civilization has gradually introduced, we shall at first be tempted to suspect, that the "*sad-*" *ness* of demeanour," which was the characteristic of good breeding, arose from the dullness and uniformity of their lives. Yet the list of their amusements, though differing in some particulars from those of their successors, was extremely numerous. Much time must have been dedicated to the practice of fighting, both in jest and in earnest; because romance is principally employed in describing the one, and history contains little more than their exploits in the other. The *mystery of the woods*, or science of hunting, required no less study of mind,

and labour of body, than the conduct of a military expedition; and, at a time of the year when venison was the only fresh meat that could be procured, it was, perhaps, a necessary occupation. Hawking, or the *mystery of rivers*, by which they principally supplied their tables with wild-fowl, and which required little preparation, was an almost daily source of amusement: and when the weather was such as to preclude the possibility of these exercises, there still remained the sedentary recreations of chess, back-gammon, and various other games on *the tables*, music, dancing, questions of love, and stories of past, or the anticipation of future tournaments.

But a very principal business of life was eating and drinking. It is true that, for some time after the conquest, the Norman nobles were satisfied with two moderate meals in a day; but it was at length discovered, that no less than five might, without much inconvenience, be introduced into the same period; and that three hours were by no means too long for the principal meal, allowing for the ceremonies of *washing*,* of marshalling the guests and the dishes, and listening to the tales or

* It seems that the whole company washed in succession, and that it was usual for the mistress of the house to lead out for this purpose, the guest whom she particularly wished

music of the minstrels. Public suppers were generally followed by dancing;* and that, by the rear-supper, or collation, consisting of spiced cakes and medicated wines.

In all the above-mentioned amusements (war and tilting only excepted) the ladies appear to have participated: indeed, their will was the motive of every action; and hence, while the stouter knights

to distinguish. In the fabliau of *Le chevalier qui faisoit parler*, &c. the author says—

Et la comtesse pour laver
Prit par les mains le chevalier,—
Et puis le comte, et les pucelles,
Les dames, et les demoiselles
Lavent après, et l'autre gent.

* In the same fabliau it is said—

Avint qu'il fut tems de souper,
Si s'en rallerent, pair-à-pair,
Si comme au matin s'asseoir.
Moult furent bien servis le soir
De viandes à grant plenté
Et de vins à leur volonté.
Après manger chacun commence
De faire caroles et dances,
Tant qu'il fut heure de coucher.
Puis emmenent le chevalier
En sa chambre, où fait fut son lit:
Et là, burent par grant délit,
Puis prirent congé, &c.

were exchanging wounds and bruises for their diversion, the less valorous courtiers were employed in devising those astonishing varieties of dress and changes of fashion, which distinguished the fourteenth century, to the great scandal of our simple historians, who deplored the waste of time and money, and the distortion of the human shape, produced by modes so "destitute and desert from "all old honest and good usage." The pointed shoes, the trailing sleeves, the parti-coloured doublets and mantles, and indecorous hose of the men, and the horned caps, and strait-laced bodices, or stays, of the women, are mentioned by many historians, with pious horror.* "They weared (says "the monk of Glastonbury) such straight clothes,

* The most pernicious fashion in use amongst the women of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was that of painting. But it may be hoped that it was confined (as it is in Russia) to the lower ranks of the community. In a *Sirvente*, written in ridicule of old ladies, by Augier, a Troubadour of the twelfth century, he says, "Je ne peux souffrir le "teint blanc et rouge que les vielles se font avec l'onguent "d'un œuf battu, qu'elles s'appliquent sur le visage, et du "blanc pardessus." Hist. Litt. des Troubadours, Tom I. p. 845. It appears, from another piece cited in the same work (Tom III. p. 167), that the ladies used a mixture of quicksilver and various drugs for painting, as well as the common red and white.

"that they had long fox tailes sewed under their "garments, to hold them forth;" and in his indignation against such an insidious species of lining, he exclaims—"the which disguisinges, and pride, "afterward brought forth and causedde many "mischiefs and myshappes that hapned in the "reme *(realm)* of England."

One of our old minstrels, author of a Romance, called the "*Squire of Low Degree*," having contrived to enumerate, within a tolerably moderate compass, all the amusements known to the fair sex, during the middle ages, it may not be amiss to transcribe the whole passage (as Mr. Warton has already done), because the book, though printed, is extremely scarce. The heroine of the piece, a daughter of the king of Hungary, being plunged (in consequence of her love for the squire) in a deep melancholy, the king, her father, endeavours to enliven her imagination, by presenting to her the following picture of the amusements that he intends to procure for her:—

To-morrow ye shall in hunting fare,
And *yede*,[1] my daughter, in a char;
It shall be cover'd with velvet red,
And cloths of fine gold all about your head,

[1] Go.

With damask white, and azure blue,
Well *diaper'd*[1] with lilies new.
Your *pomelles*[2] shall be ended with gold,
Your chains enamel'd, many a fold.
Your mantle of rich degree,
Purple pall, and ermine *free*.[3]

Jennets of Spain, that ben so white,
Trapped, to the ground, with velvet bright.

Ye shall have harp, psaltry, and song,
And other mirthis you among.

Ye shall have *Romney*,[4] and Malmesine,
Both Hypocras, and *vernage*[5] wine,
Montresse,[6] and wine of Greek,
Both *Algarde*,[7] and *de-spice*[8] eke,

[1] Variegated.

[2] *Pomel* is interpreted by La Combe, "sorte d'ornement "aux habits d'église."

[3] Noble.

[4] Wine of Romanée, in Burgundy.

[5] Wine of Vernou, in Touraine.

[6] Wine of Montrachet, near Beaune; still in estimation.

[7] Does this mean Spanish wine, from Algarva?

[8] Vin d'espices.

Antioch, and *bastard*,[1]
Pyment also, and *garnard*,[2]
Wine of Greek and Muscadell,
Both claré, pyment, and rochelle:
The red, your stomach to *defy*,[3]
And pots of *osey*[4] set you by.

You shall have venison y-bake;
The best wild-fowl that may be take,
A leash of grey-hounds for you to streke
And hart, and hind, and other like.
(Ye shall be set at such a *trist*,[5])
That hart and hind shall come to your fist;
Your disease to drive ye fro,
To hear the bugles there y-blowe —
Homeward thus shall ye ride
On hawking by the rivérs side,
With gos-hawk, and with gentil falcon,
With bugle horn, and merlyon.

[1] Junius calls vinum passum (*i. e.* raisin wine), vin bastard. Harrison mentions it as a strong wine, and good for digestion.

[2] Does this mean choice wine? wine kept in the *garner*, or warehouse?

[3] Defend? *Defaix*, in old Fr. is defence. (La Combe.)

[4] Query, sorel; oseille?

[5] A post, or station, in hunting. Tyrwhitt's Gloss.

When you come home your *meinie*[4] among,
Ye shall have revel, dances, and song;
Little children great and small
Shall sing as doth the nightingale.

Then shall ye go to your even-song,
With tenours and trebles among,
Three score of copes of damask bright,
Full of pearls they shall be *pight*;[5]—
Your censers shall be of gold,
Endent with azure, many a fold,
Your choir nor organ-song shall want
With counter-note and descant,
The other half on organs playing,
With young children full fair singing.

Then shall ye go to your suppere,
And sit in tents of green arbere,
With cloth of Arras pight to the ground,
With sapphires set, and diamond——

A hundred knightes, truly told,
Shall play with bowls in alleys cold,
Your diseases to drive away.

[4] *Maisnie*, Old Fr.; household, attendants.
[5] *Sewed*, or quilted; *piqué*. Fr.

To see the fishes in pools play,
To a draw-bridge then shall ye,
Th' one half of stone th' other of tree.
A barge shall meet you full right,
With twenty-four oars full bright,
With trumpets and with clarion,
The fresh water to row up and down.
Then shall you, daughter, ask the wine,
With spices that be good and fine,
Gentil pots with ginger green,
With dates and dainties you between.
Forty torches, burning bright
At your bridges to bring you light
Into your chamber they shall you bring
With much mirth and more liking.

Your blankets shall be of *fustiane*,[1]
Your sheets shall be of cloth of Rennes,
Your head-sheet shall be of *pery*[2] pight,
With diamonds set, and rubies bright.

When you are laid in bed so soft,
A cage of gold shall hang aloft,

[1] Fustaine, or futaine, Fr. is a thick cotton cloth, of which coverlets are still commonly made.

[2] Embroidered with precious stones.

With long pepper fair-burning,
And cloves that be sweet smelling,
Frankincense and Olibanum,
That when ye sleep the taste may come.
And, if ye no rest can take,
All night, minstrels for you shall wake.

A modern princess might possibly object to breathing the smoke of pepper, cloves, and frankincense during her sleep; but the fondness of our ancestors for these, and indeed for perfumes of all kinds, was excessive. We have seen that Lydgate thought it necessary that Venus, when rising from the sea, should be "enointe with gums and ointe-"ments sweeter for to smell;" and Martial d'Auvergne, a celebrated French poet of the fifteenth century, in his prologue to the *Aresta Amorum* (Decrees of the Court of Love), observes of the lady-judges of that court, that—

Leurs habits sentoient le cyprès
Et le musc, si abondamment,
Que l'on n'eut su être au plus près
Sans eternuer largement,
Outre plus, en lieu d'herbe verd,
Qu'on a accoustumé d'espandre,
Tout le parquet etoit couvert
De romarin et de lavandre.

In the foregoing description of diversions, the good king of Hungary has forgotten one, which seems to have been as great a favourite with the English and French, as it ever was with the Turkish ladies. This is the bath. It was considered, and with great reason, as the best of all cosmetics; and Mr. Strutt has extracted from an old MS. of prognostications, written in the time of Richard II. a medical caution to the women, against "going to "the bath *for beauty*" during the months of March and November. But it seems also to have been usual for women to bathe together, for the purpose of conversation; for, in the fabliau of Constant du Hamel (in Barbazan's collection), an invitation for this purpose occurs to the wife, as the most natural device for effecting her purpose, and her three female friends are successively the dupes of the artifice. The generality* of the fabliaux, however,

* See Le Grand, Tom. III. p 455; Tom. IV. p. 175, 232. Promiscuous bathing is also exhibited in some of the early specimens of engraving, in which women are often represented as attending men to the bath, as they still do at Berne. Wenceslaus, emperor and king of Bohemia, who died in 1418, was much attached to the bathing girl who attended him during his captivity, and for whose sake he is said to have bestowed many privileges and immunities on the owners of the baths at Baden. Her picture occurs very frequently in a

while they prove that baths, or at least bathing-tubs, were to be found even in the houses of the poorest tradesmen, evince also that they were not always very innocently employed; and those of public resort became so infamous, that their very names are expressive of debauchery.

The reader may possibly be of opinion, that the spectacle of an hundred knights, playing at bowls "*in alleys cold*," would not be so amusing as even the simplest kind of theatrical representations; and as *mysteries*, or miracle-plays, are mentioned by Chaucer's wife of Bath, as a common and fashionable diversion, it may be thought that one of these might have been advantageously substituted for the regiment of bowling knights. But the mysteries were for a long time exhibited only on stated festivals: they were performed solely by ecclesiastics; they required considerable preparation; and there did not exist in England (the only country which seems to have been known to the author of the romance) any company of actors, at the disposal of the court, till after the middle of the sixteenth century.

Mr. Warton, in his History of Poetry, has taken

finely illuminated bible, written at his instance, and still preserved in the Imperial library at Vienna. This anecdote is mentioned by Lambecius, in his account of that library.

great pains to discover the origin, and trace the progress of theatrical entertainments in Europe; and though the subject is much too extensive for the present work, it may be worth while to present to the reader what seems to be the general outline of his opinion.

He observes that, as early as the fourth century, Gregory Nazianzen, an archbishop and poet, with a view of banishing Pagan plays from the theatre of Constantinople, had composed many sacred dramas, intended to be substituted for the Greek tragedies, with hymns in lieu of the chorus. Whatever may have been the result of this first struggle between piety and taste, a second project of a similar nature is stated to have been successful. Theophylact, another patriarch, invented or adopted, about the year 990, a sort of religious pantomimes and farces, since known by the names of *Féte des Fous*, *Féte de l'Ane*, *Féte des Innocents*, &c. in the hopes of weaning the people from the Bacchanalian and Calendary rites, and other Pagan ceremonies, by the substitution of Christian spectacles. These farces passing first into Italy, suggested the composition of *mysteries*, which, from thence, found their way into France, and the rest of Europe; and were every where eagerly adopted by the clergy, who were glad to have in their own hands the

direction of a popular amusement, capable of rivalling the scandalous pantomimes and buffooneries hitherto exhibited at fairs, by the jugglers and itinerant minstrels, whom the merchants carried with them for the purpose of attracting customers.

A sort of miracle play, or mystery, is said to have been acted in England, by the monks of the abbey of Dunstable, in the eleventh century. This was the famous play of "the Death of St. Catherine." At this time, the only persons who could read were ecclesiastics; but, as learning increased, the practice of acting these plays, migrated from the monasteries to the universities; which were formed on a monastic plan, and in many respects resembled the ecclesiastical bodies. In the statutes of Trinity-hall, Cambridge, an IMPERATOR, or PREFECTUS LUDORUM (master of the revels), is ordered to be appointed, for the purpose of superintending the amusements and plays at Christmas; and a Christmas-prince, or *lord of misrule*, corresponding to the *Imperator* at Cambridge, was a common temporary magistrate at Oxford.

The same practice was afterwards introduced into our schools; and from hence into the companies of singing-boys in the choirs, and the law societies. All Lyly's plays, and many of Jonson's

and Shakspeare's, were acted by the children of the Chapel-royal, assisted by those of St. Paul's. "Ferrex and Porrex" was acted A. D. 1561, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, and Gascoyne's "Supposes" in 1566, by those of Gray's-inn.

It may be proper to observe, that this sketch, though possibly correct in general, is by no means so in respect to France; for it appears, that a regular company of players was established at Paris, by a *réglement* of Charles VI. in December 1402, under the title of *Les Confreres de la Passion*. It is said to have been founded by a set of pilgrims, returning from the Holy Land, who used to assemble in the public squares to chant, in several parts, the miracles of the Virgin. This company was succeeded, during the same reign, by a new one, composed of lawyers' clerks belonging to the *Parlement* and the *Chatelet*, under the direction of a manager, who called himself *le Prince des Sots;* and began to exhibit a new and burlesque species of entertainments, which, under the successive names of *Sotties*, *Pois-pilés*, and lastly *Farces*, continued in fashion till the time of Moliere.

CHAPTER XIV.

Reign of Henry VI.—Hugh de Campeden.—Thomas Chestre.—Scotch Poets—Clerk of Tranent.—Holland.—Henry the Minstrel.—Reigns of Edward IV. and V.—Harding.—Scogan.—Norton.—Ripley.—Lady Juliana Berners.—William of Nassington.—Lord Rivers.—Scotch Poets—Robert Henrysoun.—Patrick Johnson—and Mersar.

THE only poets who can be assigned, with any certainty, to the reign of Henry VI. are, HUGH DE CAMPEDEN and THOMAS CHESTRE, both of whom are only known to us as translators; the former having turned into English verse the romance of *Sidrac*, and the latter, the Lay of Lanval, composed, or rather paraphrased, from the Breton original, by Mademoiselle *Marie*, a French poetess of the twelfth century.

The romance of Sidrac is represented by Mr. Warton as a compendium of Arabian philosophy, rather than a fable of chivalry; and Campeden's

translation as exhibiting " no sort of elegance in " the diction, nor harmony in the versification." Chestre's work, on the contrary, besides being very fanciful and entertaining, appears to be written by an experienced versifier; because the six-lined stanza, in which it is composed, has not, in any degree, fettered his expression, which is very generally natural and easy, as well as picturesque. It is unnecessary, however, to give any extract from this poem, as it has been very lately submitted to the public in the Appendix to Mr. Way's translation of the Fabliaux, (Faulder, 1800). Mr. Warton suspects, that the *Earl of Thoulouse*, a metrical romance, of which he has given the analysis, (Hist. Eng. Poet. Vol. II. p. 113.) may also have been translated by Chestre.

The dearth of names, in our poetical catalogue, towards the middle of the fifteenth century, is not a proof that the art of poetry was, at this time, very little cultivated. The contrary, indeed, is most probably true; because many of the old ballads preserved in Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry; several of the metrical romances, of which a large collection still remains in MSS. in our public libraries; and the greater part of the fabulous stories of Robin Hood, as well as the Tales of Gamelyn, and of Beryn, so long attri-

buted to Chaucer, appear to belong to this period. But though Henry VI. was likely to be the patron of a talent, to which he had himself some pretensions;[1] the general despondence and discontent which prevailed during a great part of his reign, could not but discourage men of rank and learning, from employing their leisure in works of imagination.

In Scotland, on the contrary, the progress of poetry seems to have been uninterrupted; for Dunbar has enumerated no less than eighteen distinguished "Makers," many of whom must have flourished as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. One of these, *Clerk of Tranent*, is cele-

[1] In the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Vol. II. p. 247, the following wretched lines are ascribed to this wretched prince.

Kingdomes are bote cares;
State ys devoyd of staie;
Ryches are ready snares,
And hasten to decaie.
Plesure is a pryvie prycke
Wich vyce doth styll provoke;
Pompe unprompt; and fame a flayme;
Powre a smouldryng smoke.
Who meenethe to remoofe the rocke,
Owte of the slymie mudde,
Shall myre hymselfe, and hardlie scape
The swellynge of the flodde.

brated as the author of the "Adventures of Sir "Gawain," a romance, of which two cantos appear to be preserved. They are written in stanzas of thirteen lines, with alternate rhymes, and much alliteration; and in a language so very obsolete as to be often quite unintelligible. There is, however, a sort of wildness in the narrative, which is very striking. (Vide Pinkerton's Scotish Poems, 3 vols. 1792).

Another Scotish poet, of the name of Holland, has left an allegorical satire, called the *Houlate* (the Owl), composed in the same metre with the preceding; and in language equally obscure, but far less beautiful. Mr. Warton seems to have proved, that it was written before 1455. (See the same collection).

But the most interesting composition of this period is, the celebrated metrical history of Sir William Wallace, written by a poet whose surname is not known, but who is distinguished by the familiar appellations of *Henry the Minstrel* and *Blind Harry*. "The date of this book, (according to the account "prefixed to the edition printed at Perth, 1790), "and consequently the age of the author may be "almost exactly ascertained. *In the time of my* "*infancy* (says Major) *Henry, who was blind from* "*his birth, composed a book consisting entirely of*

" *the achievements of William Wallace.* Major " was born at North Berwick, in East Lothian, in " 1446. It was therefore about the year 1446 that " Henry wrote, or made public, his entire history " of Wallace." From the same account it appears, that he was a kind of itinerant minstrel, and that " by reciting his histories before princes or great " men, he gained his food and raiment; of which " (says Major, very justly), he was worthy."

That a man *born* blind should excel in any science is sufficiently extraordinary, though by no means without example; but that he should become an excellent poet is almost miraculous; because the soul of poetry is description. Perhaps, therefore, it may be safely assumed, that Henry was not inferior, in point of genius, either to Barber or Chaucer; nor indeed to any poet of any age or country: but it is our present business to estimate the merit of the work, rather than the genius of the author.

The similarity of the subject will naturally induce every reader to compare the life of Wallace with Barber's life of Bruce; and, on such a comparison, it will probably be found that Henry excels his competitor in correctness of versification, and, perhaps, in perspicuity of language (for both of which he was indebted to the gradual improvements

which had taken place during near a century); but that in every other particular he is greatly inferior to his predecessor. Though Henry did not invent what he relates, but probably employed such materials as he believed to be authentic; and though this may serve as a general excuse for many exaggerations and false facts, and, among the rest, for his carrying Wallace, at the head of a victorious army, to dictate a peace at St. Albans; yet, to represent the fierce and politic Edward I. trembling for his safety in the Tower of London; weeping over the body of his nephew; and sending his queen to supplicate for a disgraceful peace; is to confound all our ideas of historical characters, and to disgust the reader with useless improbability.

The Bruce is evidently the work of a politician as well as poet. The characters of the king, of his brother, of Douglas, and of the earl of Murray, are discriminated, and their separate talents always employed with judgment; so that every event is prepared and rendered probable by the means to which it is attributed: whereas the life of Wallace is a mere romance, in which the hero hews down whole squadrons with his single arm, and is indebted for every victory, to his own muscular strength. Both poems are filled with descriptions of battles, but in those of Barber our attention is successively

directed to the cool intrepidity of king Robert, to the brilliant rashness of Edward Bruce, or to the enterprising stratagems of Douglas; while in Henry we find little more than a disgusting picture of revenge, hatred, and blood.

Still however it must be confessed, that the life of Wallace is a work of very great poetical merit. The following extracts are chosen as specimens of our author's style in different kinds of description; the first, representing a visionary spectre, seen by Wallace, soon after he had put to death one of his own partisans (of the name of Fawdon), whom he suspected of treachery. The scene is a solitary castle, called *Gask Hall*, at which Wallace arrived with a few partisans, after a very distressing retreat.

In the Gask Hall their lodging have they taen;
Fire got they soon, but meat then had they nane.
Twa sheep they took beside them off the fold;
Ordain'd to sup into that seemly hold,
Graithed[1] in haste some food for them to dight:
So heard they blow rude hornis upon height.
Twa sent he forth to look what it might be;
They 'bode right long—and no tithings heard he,

[1] Made ready.

But *boustevus*[1] noise so *brimly*[2] blow and fast.
So other twa into the wood forth past.
None came again; but *bousteously* gan blow:
Into great ire he sent them forth *on row*.[3]
When that alone Wallace was leaved there,
The awful blast abounded mickle mair:
Then *trow'd*[4] he well *they*[5] had his lodging seen,
His sword he drew of noble metal keen,
Syn forth he went where that he heard the horn.
Without the door Fawdoun was him beforn,
(As till his sight) his own head in his hand,
A cross he made, when he saw him so stand.
At Wallace in the head he *swaked yare*,[6]
And he in haste soon *hynt*[7] it by the hair,
Syn out at him again he couth it cast,
Intill his heart he was greatly aghast.
Right well he trow'd that was no sprite of man;
It was some devil that such malice began;
He wist not well there longer for to bide,
Up through the hall thus *wight*[8] Wallace gan glide,

[1] Huge, boisterous? It seems to come from the Goth. *busa*, "cum impetu ferri." Ihre Gloss.

[2] Fiercely. Ruddiman's Gloss.

[3] In a row, altogether. The edit. 1685 has, *in* row.

[4] Believed.

[5] *i. e.* the enemy.

[6] Threw suddenly.

[7] Seized.

[8] Bold.

To a close stair—the boardis *raiff*[1] in twinn:
Fifteen foot large he lept out of that inn.
Up the water suddenly he couth fare;
Again he *blent*[2] what 'perance he saw there;
He thought he saw Fawdoun, that ugly sire,
That whole hall he had set in a fire;[3]
A great rafter he had intill his hand;
Wallace as then no longer would he stand.
Of his good men full great mervail had he,
How they were *tynt*[4] through his *feyle*[5] fantaisie.
Trusts right well all this was sooth indeed;
Suppose that it no point be of the creed—
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
By such mischief giff his men might be lost,
Drowned, or slain among the English host,
Or what it was in likeness of Fawdoun,
Which brought his men to sudden confusion——
I cannot speak of such divinité, &c.

[Book V. ver. 175, &c.]

The following incident is of a less terrific nature.

[1] Split, were *riven*.
[2] Looked. In the edit. 1685, it is *blenked*.
[3] Upon the house, and all the rest on fire. Edit. 1685.
[4] Lost.
[5] Probably the same as *fey*, *(Rudd. Gloss.)* fatal.

Wallace had a mistress at Perth, whom he visited in the disguise of a priest; but he was accidentally discovered, and his mistress seized, and prevailed on by threats and promises to betray her gallant admirer. When every preparation has been made to surprise him—

——————— he enter'd in the town
Witting no thing of all this false treasoun,
Till her chamber he went *but mair abaid.*[1]
She welcomed him, and full great pleasance made.
What that they wrought I cannot *graithly*[2] say;
Right unperfyt I am of Venus' play:
But hastily he graithed him to gang.
Then she him took, and *speir'd if he thought lang?*[3]
She asked him that night with her to bide,
Soon he said, " Nay! for chance that may betide!
" My men are left all at mis-rule for me;
" I may not sleep this night while I them see!"
Then weeped she, and said full oft, " Alas!
" That I was made! wo worth the cursed cause!
" Now have I lost the best man living is;
" O feeble mind, to do so foul amiss!

[1] Without more *abode*, *i. e.* delay.

[2] Readily.

[3] Asked if he thought the time long, *i. e.* if he was tired.

" O *waryd*[1] wit, wicked, and wariance.
" That me has brought into this mischeful chance!
" Alas," she said, " in world that I was wrought!
" If all his pain on myself might be brought!
" I have *'served to be brent in a gleid.*"[2]

When Wallace saw she *ner of witt couth weid,*[3]
In his armis he caught her soberly,
And said," Dear heart, who has mis-done aught? I?"
" Nay, I (quoth she) has falsely wrought this train,
" I have you sold! right now ye shall be slain!"
She told him [all] her treason till an end
As I have said; what needis more legend?
At[4] her he speir'd if she *forthought*[5] it sore:
" Wo! yea (she said) and shall do evermore!
" My waryed *werd*[6] in world I *mon*[7] fulfill:
" To mend this 'miss I would burn on a hill!"

He comfort her, and bade her have no dreid;
" I will (he said) have some part of thy *weid,*"[8]
Her gown he took on him, and kerchiefs als:
" Will God, I shall escape this treason false,

[1] Cursed. (Werian. Sax.)
[2] Deserved to be burnt in a coal fire.
[3] She could not imagine any contrivance?
[4] *Of* her he asked, &c.
[5] Repented.
[6] Destiny.
[7] Must.
[8] Dress.

" I thee forgive!" withouten wordis mair,
He kissed her, syne took his leave to fare.
His *burly*[1] brand that help'd him oft in need,
Right privily he hid under that weid.
To the south gate the *ganest*[2] way he drew,
Where that he found of armed men *enew*.[3]
To them he told, dissembled countenance,
" To the chamber, where he was upon chance,
" Speed fast! (he said) Wallace is locked in!"
From him they sought withouten noise or din,
To that same house; about they gan them cast.
Out at the gate then Wallace gat full fast,
Right glad in heart when that he was without,
Right fast he *yede*,[4] a stour pace, and a stout.
Two him beheld, and said, " We will go see!
" A *stalwart*[5] quean, forsooth, yon seems to be."
Him they followed, &c.

[Book IV. ver. 731, &c.]

The abruptness of this author's manner has very often a dramatic effect, and gives considerable life and spirit to his narrative, which, on account of his blindness, he was unable to diversify with those

[1] Shakspeare uses the word for *huge*; but it seems to be derived from the Old French word *bouira*, (*bourrer*, *frapper*), to strike. La Combe.

[2] Readiest.

[3] Enough.

[4] Went.

[5] Bold.

beautiful pieces of picturesque description, in which the Scotch poets in general have so particularly excelled. The relation of Wallace's fishing adventure, in the first book; that of his engagement with the " red reiffar" (*rover*), in the ninth; and several smaller incidents dispersed through the work, are sketched with singular ability, and prove that Henry was a great master of his art, and that he deserved the popularity which he acquired among his countrymen, and which he continues to retain, after the lapse of more than three centuries.

Of the almost numberless editions of this work, the most elegant, and apparently the most correct, is that of Perth, 1790, which professes to be exactly copied from the MS. in the Advocate's library at Edinburgh.

The only poets who occur in the reign of Edward IV. are, John Harding; whose chronicle is beneath criticism, in point of composition, and can only be an object of curiosity to the antiquary: Scogan, whose pretended jests were published by Andrew Borde, a mad physician in the court of Henry VIII.; and John Norton and George Ripley, whose didactic poems, on the subject of Alchemy, are preserved, together with much other trash, in the strange farrago edited by Ashmole, under the title of " Theatrum Chemicum."

But the greatest literary curiosity of this reign, is the work of the Lady Juliana, sister to Richard lord Berners, and prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell, which was written in 1481, and published soon after, at the neighbouring monastery at St. Albans. It contains treatises on hawking, hunting, and heraldry; in all of which the good lady seems to have rivalled the most eminent professors of those arts. A second edition, which was printed at London by Winken de Worde, in 1496, contains an additional treatise on the art of angling; as also a sort of lyrical epilogue to the book of hunting, which is not entirely devoid of merit. In the third edition (printed partly by Robert Toy, and partly for him by W. M. Copland), the treatise on heraldry is wanting; but the epilogue is preserved. It is as follows:—

To have a faithful friend.

A faithful friend would I fain find,
To find him there he might be found;
But now is the world wext so unkind,
That friendship is fall to the ground.
Now, a friend have I found,
That I will neither *ban*[1] nor curse;
But, of all friends in field or town,
Ever grammercy mine own purse.

[1] Execrate.

My purse it is my privy wife;
(This song I dare both sing and say:)
It parteth men of muche strife,
When every man for himself shall pay.
As I ride in rich array
For gold and silver men will me *flourish*:[1]
By this matter I dare well say
Ever grammercy mine own purse.

As I ride with gold so red,
And have to do with landes law,
Men for my money will make me speed,
And for my goods they will me knowe:
More and less to me will draw;
Both the better and the worse:
By this matter I say *in sawe*[2]
Ever grammercy mine own purse.

It befell me upon a time
As it hath done by many a one mo,
My horse, my neat, my sheep, my swine,
And all my goods were gone me fro:
I went to my friends and told them so;
And home again they bade me truss:
I said again, when I was wo,
Ever grammercy mine own purse.

[1] Probably *flatter*: but the rhyme is indefensible.
[2] Proverbially.

Therefore I rede you, sires all,
To assay your friends ere you have need:
For, an ye come to have a fall,
Full few of them for you will *grede*.[1]
Therefore, assay them every one,
Both the better and the worse:—
Our Lord, that shope both sun and moon
Send us spending in our purse.

The treatise on hunting, though written in rhyme, has no resemblance to poetry; the other parts of the work are professedly written in prose.

Mr. Warton notices, as contemporary with dame Juliana, William of Nassington, a proctor in the ecclesiastical court of York, who translated in 1480, into English verse, a Latin essay on the Trinity, written by John of Waldenby, an Augustine friar of Yorkshire. About the same time, was published an anonymous work, called the Calendar of Shepherds, translated from the "Calendrier des Bergers." It is a sort of perpetual almanack, consisting of mingled prose and verse, and containing, like many of our modern almanacks, a vast variety of heterogeneous matter.

A ballad, written by Anthony Woodville, earl of Rivers, during his confinement in Pontefract

[1] Cry, lament.

Castle (vide Percy's Reliques, Vol. II. p. 44, last edit.; or Ritson's Ancient Songs, p. 87.), completes the catalogue of English poetry during this period.

Among the minor poets of Scotland, at this time, the most conspicuous, perhaps, is Robert Henrysoun, of whose life, however, no anecdotes are preserved, except that, according to Sir Fr. Kinaston, who translated his Testament of Cressida, he was a schoolmaster at Dumferling. His "Complaint of Cressida" is to be found in Urry's edition of Chaucer, and several of his poems are inserted in lord Hailes's extracts from the Bannatyne MSS. Among the best of these, is the popular ballad of "Robene and Makyne;" but the most singular is the following, which is called

The Garment of good Ladies.

Would my good lady love me best,
  And work after my will,
I should a garment goodliest
  Gar make her body till.[1]

Of high honour should be her hood,
  Upon her head to wear,

[1] Cause to be made to her shape.

Garnish'd with governance, so good
Ne *deeming should her deir.*[1]

Her *sark*[2] should be her body next,
Of chastity so white;
With shame and dread together mixt,
The same should be *perfyt.*[3]

Her kirtle should be of clean constance,
Laced with *lesum*[4] love;
The *mailyeis*[5] of continuance,
For never to remove.

Her gown should be of goodliness,
Well ribbon'd with renown;
Purfiled[6] with pleasure in *ilk*[7] place,
Furred with fine fashioun.

Her belt should be of benignity,
About her middle meet;

[1] No opinions should dismay her; *i. e.* she should have no cause to fear censure.

[2] Shift.

[3] Perfect.

[4] Loyal.

[5] Net-work, Fr.; here it means the oylet-holes for lacing her kirtle.

[6] *Parfilé*, Fr.; fringed, or bordered.

[7] Each.

Her mantle of humility
  To *thole*[1] both wind and wet.

Her hat should be of fair having,
  And her tippet of truth;
Her *patelet* of good *pansing*,[2]
  Her *hals-ribband of ruth*.[3]

Her sleeves should be of esperance,
  To keep her from despair:
Her gloves of the good governance,
  To hide her fingers fair,

Her shoen should be of *sickerness*,[4]
  In sign that she not slide:
Her hose of honesty, I guess,
  I should for her provide.

Would she put on this garment gay,
  I durst swear by my *seill*,[5]
That she wore never green or gray,
  That *set*[6] her half so well.

[1] Suffer. Sax.

[2] Thinking. I do not understand the word *patelet* (pattelette. Fr.) unless it mean *lappet*.

[3] Her neck-ribband of pity.

[4] Security, steadiness.

[5] Felicity.

[6] Became.

Lord Hailes, in his notes on this poem, which he supposes to be " a sort of paraphrase of 1 Tim. " ii. 9—11," observes very justly, that the comparison between female ornaments, and female virtues, is carried so far as to become " somewhat " ridiculous." But this strange conversion of the virtues into the stock in trade, of an allegorical mantua-maker, was first conceived by *Olivier de la Marche*, who, in a poem intitled " Le Triomphe, ou " Parement des Dames d'Honneur," recommends to the ladies *slippers of humility*, *shoes of diligence*, *stockings of perseverance*, *garters of* " ferme propos" (*i. e.* determination), *a petticoat of chastity*, *a pincushion of patience*, &c.

Such was the taste of the age, but the following fine moral poem, will shew that Henrysoun's talents were fitted for a better employment than that of imitating Olivier de la Marche.

The Abbey Walk.

Alone as I went up and down,
In an abbey, was fair to see,
Thinking what consolation
Was best unto adversity;
On casc[1] I cast on side mine *ee*,[2]
And saw this written on a wall:

[1] By chance. [2] Eye.

" Of what estate, man, that thou be,
" Obey, and thank thy God *of*[1] all!"

Thy kingdom, and thy great empire,
Thy royalty, nor rich array,
Shall nought endure at thy desire;
But, as the wind, will wend away.
Thy gold, and all thy goodis gay,
When fortune list, will fra thee fall:
Sen thou *sic*[2] samples sees ilk day,
Obey, and thank thy God of all!

Though thou be blind, or have an halt,
Or in thy face deformed ill,
So it come not through thy default,
No man should thee *repreif*[3] by skill.
Blame not thy Lord, so is his will!
Spurn not thy foot against the wall;
But with meek heart, and prayer still,
Obey, and thank thy God of all.

God, of his justice, *mon*[4] correct;
And, of his mercy, pity have;
He is a judge, to none suspect,
To punish sinful man and save.

[1] For. [2] Such.
[3] Reprove, [4] Must.

Though thou be lord *atour the laif*,[1]
And afterward made bound and thrall,
A poor beggar, with scrip and staff—
Obey, and thank thy God of all.

This changing, and great variance
Of earthly states, up and down,
Is not *but*[2] casualty and chance,
(As some men says without reasown)
But by the great provision
Of God above, that rule thee shall!
Therefore, ever thou make thee *boun*[3]
To obey, and thank thy God of all.

In wealth be meek, *heich*[4] not thyself;
Be glad in wilful poverty;
Thy power, and thy worldis pelf,
Is nought but very vanity.
Remember, *him*[5] that died *on tree*,[6]
For thy sake tasted bitter gall:
Who *heis*[7] low hearts, and *loweis hi*,[8]
Obey; and thank thy God of all!

[1] Above the rest: *literally*, *beside* the rest. Fr.
[2] Only.
[3] Ready.
[4] Exalt.
[5] He.
[6] On the cross.
[7] Exalts.
[8] Lowers high.

Patrick Johnstoun is only known to us by a single specimen of 64 lines, printed in lord Haile's collection. The following are the most striking stanzas.

The three dead Powis.[1]

I.

O sinful man! into this mortal see
Which is the vale of mourning and of care,
With *gaistly*[2] sight behold our headis three;
Our *holkit* eyn, our *peeled powis bare.*[3]
As ye are now, *into*[4] this world we were;
As fresh, as fair, as lusty to behold.
When thou lookest on this sooth exemplar,
Of thyself, man, thou may be right un-bold.

III.

O wanton youth! as fresh as lusty May,
Fairest *of*[5] flowers renewed white and red,
Behold our heads, O lusty gallants gay!
Full loathly thus shall lie thy lustyhed
Holkit, and how, and wallowit as the weed.[6]
Thy *crampland*[7] hair, and eke thy crystal eyn,

[1] Polls, skulls. [2] Ghastly, or mental sight? [3] Bald, bare skulls. [4] In. [5] With.

[6] *Holkit* and *how* are nearly synonymous, both meaning *hollow*, emaciated: wallowed is *faded.*

[7] Curled, like tendrils.

Full carefully conclude shall doleful *deid*,[1]
Thy example here by us it may be seen.

IV.

O ladies, white in clothés *coruscant*[2]
Polish'd with pearl and many [a] precious stone,
With pappés white, and *halses*[3] elegant,
Circled with gold and sapphires many [a] one;
Your fingeris small, white as *whalis bone*,[4]
Array'd with rings, and many rubies red;
As we lie thus, so shall ye lie ilk one
With peeled polls, and holket thus your head.

VI.

This question who can absolve, let's see,
What *phisnamour*[5] or perfect palmister,
Who was fairest or foulest of us three?
Or which of us of kind was gentiller,
Or most excellent in science or in lere,
In art music, or in astronomy?

[1] Death shall put an end to, &c.

[2] Dazzling. [3] Necks.

[4] This does not mean what we call *whalebone*, nor indeed any *bone*, but the tooth or horn of the *narwal*, or unicorn-fish, which was employed for many of the purposes of ivory.

[5] Physiognomist.

Here shoulde be your study and repair,
And think as thus all your heades mon be!

Another Scotish poet of this period, is Mersar, whose Christian name is not known; and of whose talents the following small poem, extracted from Lord Hailes's collection, affords the only specimen.

Peril in Paramours.

I.

Alas! so *sober*[1] is the might
Of women, for to make debate
In contrair menis subtle slight,
Which are fulfill'd with *dissait*.[2]
With treason so intoxicate
Are mennis mouthés at all hours
Whom in to trust no woman *wait*,[3]
Sic peril lies in paramours.

II.

Some swearis that he loves so well,
That he will die without remede,
But if that he her friendship feel
That *garris*[4] him sic languor lead;

[1] Weak.
[2] Deceit.
[3] Knows.
[4] Causes.

And, though he have no doubt of speed,
Yet will he sigh, and show great showers,
As he would *sterfe into that stead*![1]
Such peril lies in paramours.

III.

Oathis to swear, and gifts to *hecht*,[2]
(More than he has thirty fold!)
And for her honour for to fight,
While that his blood becomis cold!
But, fra she to his wishes yold,
Adieu, farewell these summer flowers!
All grows in glass that seemed gold:[3]
Sic peril lies in paramours.

IV.

Then turnis he his sail anon,
And passes to another port;
Though she be never so wo-begone,
Her carés cold are his comfórt.

[1] Die in that place.

[2] Promise.

[3] The substitution of glass for silver or golden drinking vessels, suggested this proverbial phrase, which is not uncommon amongst our early poets.

Herefore, I pray in termis short,
Christ keep these *birdis bright in bowers*,[1]
Fra false lovers, and their resort!
Sic peril lies in paramours.

[1] It has been already observed that the expression birds (i. e. *brides*), bright in bowers, was a poetical circumlocution for *women*.

CHAPTER XV.

Reign of Henry VII.—William Dunbar—Gawin Douglas.—Minor Poets of the Reign.—Stephen Hawes.

WILLIAM DUNBAR, the greatest poet that Scotland has produced, was born about the year 1465, at Salton, in East Lothian, and became a travelling noviciate of the Franciscan order, in which character he visited several parts of England and France; but disliking this mode of life, he returned to Scotland, where he died in old age, about 1530. "In his younger days (says Mr. Pinkerton), he seems to have had great expectations, "that his merit would have recommended him to "an ecclesiastical benefice; and frequently in his "small poems addresses the king to that purpose, "but apparently without success. I have in vain "looked over many calendars of charters, &c. of "this period, to find Dunbar's name; but suspect "that it was never written by a lawyer."

Mr. Warton, who has bestowed great commendations on Dunbar, observes that his genius is peculiarly "of a moral or didactic cast;" and it is

certainly in such pieces that he is most confessedly superior to all who preceded, and to nearly all who have followed him; but his satires, his allegorical and descriptive poetry, and his tales, are all admirable, and full of fancy and originality.

The following specimen, which was apparently written in his youth, since it is stated to have been composed at Oxford, during his travels in England, is strongly marked by that turn of mind which is attributed to him by Mr. Warton.

Lair is vain without governance.[1]

To speak of science, craft, or sapience,
Of virtue, moral *cunning*,[2] or doctríne;
Of truth, of wisdom, or intelligence;
Of every study, lair, or discipline;
All is but *tynt*,[3] or ready for to *tyne*,[4]
Not using it as it should used be,
The craft *exercing*,[5] atchieving not the fine:
A perilous sickness is vain prosperity!

The curious probation logical;
The eloquence of ornate rhetoric;
The natural science philosophical;
The dark appearance of astronomy;

[1] Learning is vain without good conduct. [2] Knowledge.
[3] Lost. [4] Lose. [5] Exercising.

The theolog's sermon; the fable of poetry;
Without good life all in the *salf does dé*,[1]
As Mayis flowers does in September dry:
A perilous life is vain prosperité!

Wherefore, ye clerkis, greatest of constance,
Fullest of science and of knowledging,
To us be mirrors in your governance!
And in our darkness be lamps of seeing!
Or then in vain is all your long *lering*![2]
If to your saws your deedis contrair be,
Your *most*[3] accuser is your own cunning.
A perilous sickness is vain prosperité.
[Pinkerton's Anc. Scot. Poems, p. 106.]

The following is still more beautiful:—

Meditation, written in winter.

I.

Into thir[4] dark and *drublie*[5] days,
When sable all the heaven arrays,
When misty vapours clouds the skies,

[1] I do not understand the word *salf*; perhaps it is *self*, Ruddiman observes, that G. Douglas, and other authors of that time, constantly wrote *the self* for *itself*.

[2] Learning. [3] Greatest.

[4] In these. [5] Troubled. (Pinkerton's Glossary.)

Nature all courage me denies
Of songs, balladis, and of plays.

II.

When that the night does lengthen hours,
With wind, with hail, and heavy showers,
My dally sprite does lurk *for schoir;* [1]
My heart, for languor, *does* [2] forlore,
For lack of Summer with his flowers.

III.

I wake, I turn; sleep may I nought;
I vexed am with heavy thought;
This world all over I cast about;
And, aye the more I am in doubt,
The more that I remede have sought.

IV.

I am assay'd on every side.
Despair says aye, " In time provide;
" And get something whereon to live,
" Or, with great trouble and mischief,
" Thou shalt into this court abide."

[1] Dread? (Pink. Gloss.) perhaps it may mean *for sure*, i. e. *certainly*.

[2] Ought it not to be *is?*

VI.

Then Prudence says, "Be not aghast:
"Into thine Truth within thine heart,
"And Prudence work with her sage
"When has to reason may manage,
"Voice has her place to run her part."

VII.

And Prudence is my ear says aye,
"Why would you not wait will away?
"Or have what you may have to spare
"Is more as to another place
"A journey going every day?"

VIII.

And then says Age, "My friend come near;
"And is no strange I then require.
"Come brother, by the hand me take!
"Remember, thou hast compt to make
"Of all the time thou spended here?"

VIII.

Age, Death[1] casts up his gates wide,
"Saying, "*Thee*[2] open shall you bide:

[1] *Then death.*
These shall wait for you always open.

"Albeit that you were never so stout,
"Under this *lyntall*[1] shall thou *lout*:[2]
"There is none other way beside."

IX.

For fear of this all day I droop.
No gold in chest, nor wine in *coop*,[3]
No lady's beauty, nor love's bliss,
May *let*[4] me to remember this,
How glad *that ever*[5] I dine or sup.

X.

Yet, when the night begins to short,
If does my sprite *some part*[6] comfort,
Of thought oppressed with the showers.
Come lusty Summer, with thy flowers,
That I may live in some desport!

[Pinkerton, p. 125.]

It is pleasant to observe, in this fine poem, the elastic spirit of Dunbar struggling against the pressure of melancholy; indeed it appears that his morality was of the most cheerful kind. We have

[1] Lintal is the beam over a door.
[2] Bend, stoop, bow.
[3] In cup? or barrel?
[4] Prevent.
[5] Soever.
[6] In some respects, in some degree.

seen the description of his own feelings, and the following stanzas contain his advice to others.

No Treasure without Gladness.

I.

Be merry, man! and take not far in mind
The wavering of this wretched world of sorrow!
To God be humble, and to thy friend be kind,
And with thy neighbours gladly lend and borrow:
His chance to-night, it may be thine to-morrow.
Be blithe in heart for any aventure;
For oft with *wysure*[1] it has been said *aforrow*,[2]
Without gladness availis no trésure.

II.

Make thee good cheer of it that God thee sends,
For worldis *wrak*,[3] but welfare, nought avails;
No good is thine, save only but thou spends,
Remenant[4] all thou brookest but with bales.
Seek to solace when sadness thee assails.
In dolour long thy life may not endure;
Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails;
Without gladness availis no treasúre.

[1] Wisdom. [2] A-fore, before.

[3] Merchandize, treasure, &c.

[4] Thou canst enjoy all the remainder only with bale, or sorrow.

III.

Follow on pity; fly trouble and debate;
With famous folkis hold thy company:
Be charitable, and humble in thine estate,
For worldly honour lastis *but a cry*,[1]
For trouble in earth take no melancholy;
Be rich in patience, if thou in goods be poor:
Who lives merry, he lives mightily:
Without gladness availis no treasúre.

IV.

Thou sees these wretches set, with sorrow and care,
To gather goods in all their livis space;
And, when their bags are full, their selves are bare,
And of their riches but the keeping has;
While others come to spend it, that has grace,
Which of thy winning no labour had nor cure.
Take thou example, and spend with merriness:
Without gladness availis no treasure.

V.

Though all the *werk*[2] that ever had living wight,
Were only thine, no more thy part does fall
But meat, drink, clothes, and of the *laif*[3] a sight!
Yet, to the judge thou shall give 'compt of all.

[1] No longer than a sound. [2] Possessions.
[3] Remainder.

A reckoning right comes of a *ragment*[1] small.
Be just, and joyous, and do to none injure,
And Truth shall make thee strong as any wall:
Without gladness availis no treasure.
[Lord Hailes's Anc. Scot. Poems, p. 54.]

In these specimens we see much good sense, and sound morality, expressed with force and conciseness. This indeed is Dunbar's peculiar excellence. His style, whether grave or humorous, whether simple or ornamented, is always energetic; and, though all his compositions cannot be expected to possess equal merit, we seldom find in them, a weak or redundant stanza.

But his most admired, and most truly poetical works are, the "Thistle and the Rose," and the "Golden Terge."

The first of these was composed for the marriage of James IV. of Scotland, with Margaret, eldest daughter of our Henry VII.; an event which is likely to have produced many invocations to the muses, but which probably was hailed by very few panegyrics, so delicate and ingenious as this of Dunbar. In the age of allegory and romance, when a knowledge of heraldry was a necessary accomplishment, it was natural enough to compli-

[1] Accompt.

ment the royal bridegroom under the character of a *lion* (part of the arms of Scotland), or under that of the *thistle;* and to describe the bride as the *rose*, proceeding from the joint stems of York and Lancaster: but it required considerable ingenuity, to call into action these heraldic personages. The poet has recourse to a dream, in which he supposes himself accosted by May, who desires him to celebrate, in a poem, the return of Spring. She then introduces him into a delicious garden, to which all organized beings are summoned to appear before the goddess *Nature*, who crowns the lion, the eagle, and the thistle, as kings of beasts, birds, and plants, recommending, at the same time to each, many important moral, and political maxims. To the protection of the thistle, she particularly consigns the rose, whom she represents as "above the lily" (the house of Valois), and whom she also invests with a crown, so brilliant as to "illumine all the land with its light:" at which joyful event, an universal song of gratulation from the birds, interrupts the progress of the poet's vision.

In this singular, but ingenious allegory, Dunbar has interwoven a number of rich and glowing descriptions, much excellent advice, and many delicate compliments, without any fulsome adulation.

The "Golden Terge" is, perhaps, still superior to the Thistle and Rose; at least such seems to have been the opinion of Sir David Lindsay, who, in estimating the poetical genius of Dunbar, says, that he—

———" language had at large,
" As may be seen intill his *Golden Targe*."

This poem is a moral allegory, the object of which is to shew the gradual and imperceptible influence of love, which even the " golden target " of reason cannot always repell." The poet walks out in a vernal morning, which he describes much at large, and in the most glowing language: the second stanza may be taken as a good specimen of his style.

Full angel-like thir birdis sang their *hours* [1]
Within their curtains green, within their bowers,
Apparell'd, white and red, with bloomis sweet:
Enamel'd was the field with all coloúrs:
The pearled drops shook as in silver showers,
While all in balm did branch and leavis *fleit*.[2]
Depart fra Phœbus did Aurora *grete*:[3]
Her chrystal tears I saw hang on the flowers,
While he, for love, all drank up with his heat.

[1] Matins, *heures*. Fr. [2] Float. [3] Weep.

After some time—

What through the merry fowlis harmony,
And through the river's sound that ran me by,
On Flora's mantle I sleeped where I lay;
Where soon, unto my dreamis phantasy,
I saw approach, against the orient sky,
A sail, as blossom [white] upon the spray,
With mast of gold, bright as the star of day,
Which tended to the land full lustily.

And, hard on board, into the bloomed meads,
Amongst the greene *rispis*[1] and the reeds,
Arrived she; where-from anon there lands
And hundred ladies, *lusty intil weeds*,[2]
As fresh as flowers that in the May up-spreads;
In kirtles green, withouten *kell*,[3] or bands,
Their bright hair hang glittering on the strand;
In tresses clear *wypit*[4] with golden threads,
With *pawpis*[5] white, and middles small as wands.

These are allegorical ladies, viz. Nature, Venus, Aurora, &c.

[1] Bulrushes. [2] Pleasing in their attire.
[3] Cawls, or caps, to confine their hair.
[4] Whipped or tied, or enwoven. [5] Breasts.

Full lustily thir ladies, all *in fere*,[1]
Enter'd within this park of most *plaisir*,
Where that I lay *heled*[2] with leavis rank;
The merry fowlis, blissfullest of cheer,
Salust[3] Nature, methought, in their manere;
And every bloom on branch, and eke on bank,
Open'd and spread their balmy leavis dank,
Full low inclining to their queen full clear,
Whom, for their noble nourishing, they thank.

The ladies are followed by a male group, consisting of Cupid, and various other gods, who invite them to dance. The poet, quitting his ambush to view this spectacle, is discovered by Venus, who bids her *keen archers* arrest the intruder. Her attendants, dropping their green mantles, discover their bows, and advance against him. These assailants are Youth, Beauty, &c. whose darts are long ineffectual against the golden targe of Reason, till at length *Presence* (i. e. the habit of seeing the beloved object) throws a magical powder into the eyes of Reason, and the poet is overpowered by his allegorical adversaries, tempted by *Dissimulation;* terrified by *Danger;* and delivered over to *Heaviness;* after which Eolus *blows a bugle;* a storm arises, and the ladies take to their ship, which

[1] Together. [2] Covered. [3] Saluted.

disappears, after a discharge of artillery, so loud that the *rainbow seemed to break*, while the smoke rose to the firmament. This strangely terrible incident seems to have been introduced, for the purpose of contrasting with the beautiful appearance of real nature, to which the poet is awakened.

Sweet was the vapours, and soft the morrowing,
Wholesome the vale depaint' with flowers ying, &c.

The poem concludes with some laboured compliments to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate.

Of Dunbar's comic pieces, all of which possess considerable merit, the most excellent are his two tales of the "two married Women and the Widow," and the "Friars of Berwick;" the latter, in particular, is admirable; but its merit would evidently be lost in an abridgment.

I believe that no edition of this elegant and original writer has yet been published.

Gawin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, was born in the end of 1474, or in the beginning of 1475. He was third son of Archibald, the great earl of Angus; was educated at St. Andrews, is supposed to have spent some time in travelling, and on his return to Scotland, became provost of St. Giles's church in Edinburgh. In 1514, the queen-mother (who afterwards married his nephew the earl of

Angus) presented him to the abbey of Aberbrothock, and soon after to the archbishopric of St. Andrews; but, the pope having refused to confirm his nomination, he never assumed the title. In the next year (1515) he became bishop of Dunkeld; and, after some struggle, obtained peaceable possession of that See: but neither his ecclesiastical character, nor his learning, nor his many virtues, were able to preserve him, in those times of violence, from the proscription which involved the whole family of Douglas; so that towards the close of the year 1521, he was compelled, by the persecution of the duke of Albany, to seek for protection in England, where he died about the month of April, 1522.

The only remaining works of this poet are, 1. *King Hart;* 2. *The Palace of Honour;* and 3. a translation of Virgil's Æneid. Mr. Pinkerton has printed the first of these, from a MS. in the Maitland collection, in his *Ancient Scotish Poems*, (London, 1786) and the second, from the edition of 1533, in the first volume of his *Scotish Poems*, 1792. Of the third, there have been many editions, of which the best is that of Edinburgh, 1710, published by Mr. Ruddiman, with an excellent life of the author, and a very curious and valuable glossary.

King Hart is an allegorical representation of human life. The heart being the noblest part of man, is represented as his sovereign; and the court of this imaginary monarch is composed of the several attributes of youth. King Hart is assaulted by queen *Pleasance*, whom, after a long resistance, he marries. At length, *Age* arrives at their castle, and insists on being admitted: Age is immediately followed by *Conscience;* queen Pleasance takes her departure; Decrepitude attacks and wounds the king, who dies, after making his testament.

The Palace of Honour is also an allegory; the general object of which is to represent the vanity and instability of worldly glory, and to shew that virtue is the truest guide to happiness. The plan of this work was perhaps suggested by the *Sejour d'Honneur* of Octavien de St. Gelais; but as the merit of such works is now thought to consist only in the accidental beauties, which they may be found to possess, their contrivance and fabric is scarcely worth analysing. St. Gelais, who was a great translator, made a French version of the Æneid, which, though miserably executed, may possibly have recommended him to this author's notice.

Gawin Douglas began his translation of the Æneid in January, 1512, and finished it, together with the supplement written by Mapheus Vegius,

in July, 1513. The completion of such a poem in eighteen months, at a time when no metrical version of a classic (excepting Boethius) had yet appeared in English, is really astonishing; for the work is executed with equal fidelity and spirit, and is farther recommended by many beautiful specimens of original poetry, which, under the name of prologues, are prefixed to each of the thirteen books, and from which the following specimens of the author's style are selected.

The prologue to the seventh book is a description of winter, consisting of 165 lines, but the reader will probably be satisfied with a very short sketch of this dismal picture.

The time and season bitter, cold, and pale,
They short dayis that *clerkis*[1] call *brumale:*
When brim blastis of the northern *art*[2]
O'erwhelmed had Neptunus in his cart,
And all to-shake the leavis off the trees,
The raging storms *o'er-welterand*[3] *wally*[4] seas;
Rivers ran red on *spate*,[5] with water brown,
And *burnis*[6] hurlis all their bankis down;

[1] Learned men.
[2] Arcturus.
[3] Rolling over.
[4] Wavy.
[5] Foam.
[6] Rivulets.

And *land-birst*[1] rumbland rudely, with sic *bere*,[2]
So loud ne'er *rummyst*[3] wild lioun nor bear.
Flood-monsters, sic as *mere-swines*,[4] and whales,
For the tempest, low in the deep *devales*.[5]
The soil y-sopped, into water *wak*,[6]
The firmament o'ercast with cloudis black;
The ground faded, and *fauch*[7] wax all the fields,
Mountain-tops sleeked with snow *over-hields*.[8]
On raggid rockis, of hard harsh whyn-stone,
With frozen fronts, cold *clynty*[9] cliffis shone.
Beauty was lost; and barren shew the lands,
With frostis hoar *o'erfret*[10] the fieldis stands.
Sere birtir bubbis,[11] and the shoutis *snell*,[12]
Seem'd[13] on the sward in similitude of hell;
Reducing to our mind, in every stead,
Ghostly shadows of old and grisly dead:
Thick, *drumly*[14] *skuggis*[15] darken'd so the heaven!
Dim skyis oft forth warped fearful *levin*,[16] &c.

In this description, and throughout the whole

[1] Landsprings, accidental torrents. [2] Noise.
[3] Roared. [4] Sea-hogs, *i. e.* porpoises.
[5] Descend. Fr. [6] Moist with water.
[7] *Fauve*, Fr.; fawn-coloured. [8] Covered.
[9] Hard, flinty. [10] Embroidered.
[11] Many huge blasts. [12] Piercing.
[13] Gleamed. [14] Muddy, opake. [15] Shadows.
[16] Flashes.

prologue, the prospect seems to be designedly crowded, and even encumbered with dreadful images; but it must be confessed that the English reader finds himself still farther bewildered by a number of uncouth words, some of which are scarcely rendered intelligible by Ruddiman's excellent glossary.

It has been observed that, during the fourteenth century, the difference between the Scotch and English dialects, was scarcely perceptible; and that those persons who are familiarized with the phraseology of Chaucer, will find no difficulty in understanding that of Barber and Wyntown; whereas the diction of Gawin Douglas is far more obscure, and even in appearance more antiquated and obsolete, by near a century, than that of writers who preceded him. The fact is notorious; and its causes may be worth tracing.

The Danish and Anglo-Saxon, the supposed parents of the Scotch and English languages, were distinct dialects of the elder Gothic; but, in the infancy of literature, the poets of both countries, being equally dissatisfied with the poverty of their respective jargons, and conscious of the superior elegance which appeared in the French minstrel-compositions, vied with each other in borrowing, from these favourite models, as many words and

phrases as it was possible to incorporate with their native forms of speech. In consequence of this practise, the two languages seem to have attained, about the middle of the 14th century, their greatest degree of similarity. But these foreign words, being once naturalized, could not fail of undergoing considerable alterations; because the broader vowel-sounds, the gutturals, and the strongly asperated accents of the Scots, differed equally from the French and English pronunciation; and this difference was preserved and increased, on both sides, by discordant and capricious systems of orthography. At the same time, as the number of readers increased, the writers became desirous of accommodating themselves to the general taste; and consequently began to transplant, from colloquial into literary language, a variety of popular expressions, which being peculiar to the one country, were obscure, or even unintelligible, to the natives of the other.

Gawin Douglas, indeed, was so far from seeking popularity from English readers, that, in his excuses for his defects of style, he only laments the impossibility of making it purely and exclusively Scotish.

And yet, forsooth, I set my busy pain
(As that I couth) to make it BROAD AND PLAIN;

Eschewand so southerrie,[1] but our own language,
And speak as I learnt when I was a page.
Yet so soon al southern I refuse,
But some word I pronounce as neighbours does.
Like as in Latin be *Greec*[2] words some,
So me behoved, winlom (or be vinnb)
Some bastard Latin, French, or English use,
Where scant was Scottish: I had none other chuse,
&c. [Preface.]

The most beautiful of all Gawin Douglas's prologues, is that of the twelfth book; it is hoped, therefore, that the reader will pardon the length of the following extract, in favour of the splendid imagery which it exhibits. It is a description of May.

As fresh Aurora, to mighty Tithone spouse,
Ischit[3] of her saffron bed, and ivory house
In *crammesy*[4] clad, and grained violet,
With sanguine cape, the selvage purpurate,
Unshut the windows of her largé hall
Spread all with roses, and full of balm royáll:

[1] English.
[2] Greek.
[3] Issueth.
[4] *Cramoisi*, Fr.; crimson.

And eke the heavenly postis chrystalline
Upwarpis[1] broad the world til illumine——
Eous, the steed, with ruby amice red,
Above the seais liftis forth his head;
Of colour *sore*,[2] and some-deal brown as berry,
For to alighten and glad our hemispery,
The flames out birsten at his *neiss-thirlis*[3]——

While shortly, with the blasand torch of day,
Abulyeit[4] in his *lemand*[5] fresh array
Forth of his palace royal ischit Phœbus,
With golden crown, and visage glorious:
Crisp hairis, bright as chrysolite, or topase,
For whois hue might none behold his face;
The fiery sparkis bursting from his een,
To purge the air, and gild the tender green.—
The aureat fanes of his throne soverain
With glitterand glance o'erspread the ocean;
The largé floodis lemand all of light,
But with one *blenk*[6] of his supernal sight.

For to behold it was a *gloire*[7] to see
The stabled windis, and the calmed sea,

[1] Draws up. [2] Yellowish brown. Fr. [3] Nostrils.
[4] *Habillé*, dressed. The final *é* was, in Old Fr. written *eit*.
[5] Gleaming, shining. [6] Look, glance.
[7] Glory. Fr.

The *soft* seasón, the firmament serene,
The *lam*[1] illnmin'd air, and *firth emene*[2]
The silver-scaled fishes on the *grit*,[3]
O'er-thwart clear streams *sprinkilland*[4] for the heat;
With fowls shinand brown as cinnabar,
And chizzle tails stirrand here and there.—
And lusty Flora did her blooms spread
Under the feet of Phœbus' *sulgeart*[5] steed:
The swarded soil *embrode*[6] with *selcouth*[7] hues,
Wood and forest obumbrate with the *bewis*;[8]
Whose blissful branches, portray'd on the ground,
With shadows sheen, show *rockes*[9] rubicund,
Tow'rs, turrets, *kernells*[10] and pinnácles high,
Of kirkis, castles, and ilk fair city;
Stood painted every fane, *phiöll*,[11] and stage,
Upon the plain ground by their own umbrage.—

And blissful blossoms, in the bloomed sward,
Submits their heads in the young sun's safe-guard:
Ivy leaves rank o'erspread the *barnkyn*[12] wall;
The bloomed hawthorn clad his *pykis*[13] all:

[1] Clean. [2] Pleasant plain. [3] Gravel.
[4] Darting with a tremulous motion. [5] Sultry.
[6] Embroidered. [7] Uncommon. Sax. [8] Boughs.
[9] Rocks. [10] *Crenelles*, Fr.; battlements.
[11] Cupola; *fiole*. Fr. [12] Mound, from *barme*, Old Fr. the bank of a river. [13] Thorns.

Forth of fresh *burgeons*,[1] the wine-grapis ying
Endlong the trestles did on twistis *hing*.[2]
The locked buttons on the gemmed trees,
O'erspreadand leaves of nature's tapestries
Soft grassy verdure, after balmy showers,
On curland stalkis smiland to their flowers,
Beholdand them so many divers hue,
Some *pers*,[3] some *pale*,[4] some *burnet*,[5] and some blue,
Some grey, some *gules*,[6] some purpure, some sanguene,
Blanchet,[7] or brown, *fauch-yellow*[8] many ane;
Some, heavenly-colour'd, in celestial *gre*,[9]
Some, watery-hued, as the *haw-waly*[10] sea;
And some, depaint in freckles, red and white,
Some bright as gold, with aureate leavis *lite*:[11]
The daisy did un-braid her crownel smale,
And every flow'r un-lapped in the dale——
The flower-de-luce forth spread his heavenly hue,
Flow'r *damas*,[12] and columbo black and blue.
Sere downis small on dandelion sprung,
The young green bloomed strawberry leaves among:

[1] Buds. Fr.
[2] Hang.
[3] Light blue. Fr.
[4] Light yellow. Fr.
[5] *Brunet*, Fr.; brownish.
[6] Red.
[7] Whitish. Fr.
[8] Fawn-coloured yellow.
[9] *Gris*, Fr.; sky-blue.
[10] Dark-waved.
[11] Little.
[12] The damask rose.

Gimp gilliflowers their own leaves *un-shet:* [1]
Fresh primrose, and the purpure violet.
The rose-knobbis *tetand* [2] forth their head,
Gan *chip,*[3] and *kyth* [4] their vernal lippis red;
Crisp scarlet leaves sheddand, *baith at anes,*[5]
Cast fragrant smell amid from golden grains.
Heavenly lilies, with *lockerand*[6] toppis white,
Opened, and shew their crestis *redemite.*[7]
The balmy vapour from their silver *croppis* [8]
Distilland wholesome sugar'd honey-droppis—
So that ilk burgeon, scion, herb, or flow'r,
Wox [9] all embalmed of the fresh liquoúr,
And bathed hot did in dulce humours *flete,*[10]
Whereof the beeis wrought their honey sweet.—

On salt streams *wolk* [11] Dorida and Thetis;
By running strandis, nymphs, and naiades,
Sic as we clepe wenches and damisells,
In grassy grovis wandering by spring-wells;

[1] Unshut, open. [2] Peeping.
[3] Burst their calix. [4] Shew.
[5] Both at once, i. e. while some buds were expanding, other roses were shedding their leaves.
[6] Curling like locks or ringlets of hair.
[7] Crowned. [8] Heads.
[9] Grew. [10] Float.
[11] Walked?

Of bloomed branches, and flowers white and red,
Plaiting their lusty chaplets for their head.
Some sang *ring-songis*,[1] dances, *ledis*,[2] and rounds,
With voices shrill while all the vale resounds.
Whereso they walk into their caroling,
For amorous lays does all the roches ring.
One sang " The ship, sails over the salt foam,
" Will bring *thir*[3] merchants and my leman home."
Some other sings " I will be blythe and light,
" My heart is lent upon so goodly wight.
And thoughtful lovers *rownis*[4] to and fro
To lose their pain, and plain their jolly woe;
After their guise, now singand, now in sorrow,
With heartis pensive, the long summer's morrow.
Some, ballads list endite of his lady,
Some lives in hope, and some all utterly
Despaired is; and so, quite out of grace,
His purgatory he finds in every place, &c.

Before we proceed to take notice of the English poets of this reign, it will be necessary to mention two more Scotish writers, whom Gawin Douglas has associated with Dunbar in the " Palace of Honour."—

[1] Rondeaux ?
[2] Lays; *leid*, cantilena. *Teut.*
[3] These, or those.
[4] Whispers.

Of this nation I knew also anon
GREAT KENNEDY and Dunbar, yet undead,
And QUINTYN, with a *huttock*[1] on his head.

The first of these, Walter Kennedy, a native of Carrick, and the cotemporary of Dunbar, is only known to us by two satires on Dunbar in their *flyting* (scolding or lampooning), and by a poem "in praise of age," (p. 189 of lord Hailes's collection) consisting of five stanzas; one of these will be sufficient to give some idea of his style, though it may not quite justify the honourable epithet bestowed on him by the bishop of Dunkeld.

This world is set for to deceive us even,
Pride is the net, and covetise the train:
For no reward (except the joy of heaven)
Would I be young into this world again!
The ship of faith, tempestuous wind and rain
Drives, in the sea of lollardry that *blaws*;[2]
My youth is gone, and I am glad and fain,
Honour, with age, to every virtue draws.

Of the second of these poets, QUINTYN SCHAW,

[1] This word seems to be two French words in disguise—*haute toque*. Toque is described by Cotgrave to be a "bonnet or cap, somewhat like *our old courtier's velvet cap*."

[2] Blows.

one specimen only remains, which is printed by Mr. Pinkerton, from the Maitland MSS. Its title is "Advice to a Courtier," which may possibly account for the head-dress assigned to him in the Palace of Honour. Quintyn's style seems to have been easy and familiar; but having begun his poem with an idea of the resemblance between the life of a courtier and that of a mariner, he has introduced so many sea-phrases, and maritime allusions, as to render his language almost unintelligible. The concluding stanza, however, which contains the moral, is sufficiently clear.—

Dread this danger, good friend and brother,
And take example *before of other*.[1]
Know, courts and wind has *oftsys*[2] varied:
Keep well your course. and rule your rudder;
And think, with kings ye are not married!

Amongst the English contemporaries of Dunbar and Douglas, Mr. Warton enumerates these which follow. *Henry Bradshaw*, a miserable imitator of Lydgate, who wrote in English verse, "the life of "St. Werburgh, daughter of a king of the Mercians:" *Robert Fabian*, the historical alderman, who is classed as a poet in consequence of the metrical

[1] Of others before you?
[2] Oft-sithes, i. e. oft-times.

[illegible] inserted in the books of his chronicle: [illegible] Warner, a monk who wrote some miserable [illegible] for the purpose of enlivening his theological [illegible] "Speculum Christiani;" and Caxton, [illegible] who, beside his metrical de[illegible] of Wales, has left a poem of considerable [illegible] "The Works of Sapience." But [illegible] who deserve any attention are, [illegible] *Harvey* and *Stephen Hawes;* the first of [illegible] with much praise by the inge[illegible] "The Muses' Library," and the [illegible] Warton.

[illegible] supposed to have been a native of [illegible]. In about the year 1495, he [illegible] a student at Oriel College, Oxford, where [illegible] distinguished himself by his [illegible] afterwards travelled [illegible] Germany, Italy, and France, for the purpose of acquiring the languages of those coun[illegible] which he seems to have made a [illegible] proficiency. He was a voluminous [illegible] of translations, which were [illegible] by his contemporaries, as being distinguished by an ease and fluency which are not [illegible] in any other author of his age; but his poetical merit seems to have been a good deal overrated.

His smaller pieces of poetry consist of 1. Five eclogues on the miseries of courtiers, translated from the Miseriæ Curialium of Æneas Sylvius. 2. A satire on Skelton. 3. The lives of St. George, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, and St. Ethelreda: and 4. Five Eclogues from the Latin of Baptist Mantuan. From these, which Mr. Warton supposes to be the first eclogues written in English, he has selected a number of passages which, though they have no other merit, contain some curious particulars, relating to the manners and customs of the time. (They are to be found in a long note, Vol. II. p. 253, Hist. Eng. Poetry.)

But Barclay's principal and most popular poem was his "*Ship of Foolis*," a paraphrase from the German poem, written in 1494, by Sebastian Brandt, or more properly from the Latin metrical translation, published in the following year by his scholar James Loeder, or Locher. The work was intended to ridicule the vices and follies of every rank and profession, under the allegory of a ship freighted with fools of all kinds; "but it is (says "Mr. Warton) without variety of incident, or "artifice of fable." The book is now scarce though often printed; but the reader who shall turn to the extracts from it, contained in Warton's history, and in the Muses' Library, will

probably not much lament their omission in this place.

STEPHEN HAWES was a native of Suffolk, and, like Barclay, after an academical education at Oxford, passed into France and Italy, and made himself a complete master of the literature, and particularly of the poetry, of both countries. On his return to England, he obtained an establishment (as groom of the chamber) in the royal household; a reward, perhaps, for accomplishments so congenial to the taste of Henry VII. who was a great admirer of French, as well as a patron* of English poetry.

Hawes's principal work is the "History of "Graund Amour and la Belle Pucelle, called the "Pastime of Pleasure, containing the knowledge "of the seven sciences, and the course of man's "life in this world. Invented by Stephen Hawes, "groom of king Henry the Seventh his chamber." And Mr. Warton is of opinion, that "this poem "contains no common touches of romantic and "allegorical fiction;" that "the personifications "are often happily sustained, and indicate the

* Henry VII. was seldom extravagant in his donations; and yet we find, in his household accounts, the sum of 100 shillings paid to *Master Barnard*, a blind poet, in return, as it seem, for his poetical compositions.

" writer's familiarity with the Provincial school;" and that " Hawes has added new graces to Lyd-" gate's manner. It is, however, very doubtful whether every reader will concur in this favourable opinion of Stephen Hawes's merit.

Graund Amour (true gallantry), the hero of the piece, falls asleep, and sees a vision. He receives from *Fame* the first account of La Belle Pucelle (perfect beauty), and is by her referred, for farther particulars, to the *Tower of Doctrine.* Here, certainly, is a beginning very much in the spirit of the times; but the subsequent conduct of the poem is not very well calculated to gratify the impatience of any reader, who shall have taken a lively interest in the success of Graund Amour's passion. An accurate knowledge of the seven sciences, viz. grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy, does not seem to be indispensably requisite to the success of a love adventure. These sciences, it is true, are all ladies; but many of them are dreadfully prolix in their instructions. The two following stanzas are not offered as the best specimen of this author's style, but they are part of the hero's conversation with dame Grammar, who has (as she ought to have) the merit of being more concise, than dame Rhetoric, dame Music, &c.

" Madam, quoth I, for as much as there be
' Eight parts of speech, I would know right fain,
" What a noun substantive is in his degree,
" And wherefore it is so called certain?
To whom she answered right gentily again,
Saying alway that a noun substantive
Might stand without help of an adjective.

The Latin word, which that is referred
Unto a thing which is substantial,
For a noun substantive is well averred;
And, with a gender is declinal,
So all the eight parts in general
Are Latin words, annexed properly
To every speech, for to speak formally.

[Chap. V.]

The education of Graund Amour, which, however, is somewhat enlivened by a meeting with his mistress, whom he had not hitherto seen, occupies rather more than one half of this pastime of pleasure; after which he begins his military career, for the purpose of obtaining Belle Pucelle. But here the attention of the reader is very unexpectedly diverted to a strange personage, who calls himself *Godfrey Gobelive*, but who turns out to be False Report, disguised as a fool. Godfrey

calumniates the whole female sex, and relates two tales, copied from the French fabliaux. The first is the "Lay of Aristotle," the second nearly resembles that of Hippocrates; but the adventure is attributed to Virgil the enchanter, who, in return for the trick of the basket, inflicts on his fair enemy a punishment too disgusting to mention. After this gross and unnecessary episode, our allegorical hero achieves some marvellous adventures, and obtains possession of his mistress. But the story does not stop here; for Graund Amour proceeds to relate his own death and burial; and "how Remembrance made his epitaphy;" and how "Time came into the temple in marvellous "similitude;" and "how Eternity came into the "temple, and of her virtuous exhortacion," after which comes the "excusation of the authour."

Throughout the work, Hawes has studiously imitated the style of Lydgate, but he has generally copied his worst manner. He is diffuse, fond of expletives, and his epithets add nothing to the sense. Of his more laboured diction the reader will judge from the following stanza.

Her redolent words, of sweet influence,
Degouted vapour most aromatick,
And made conversion of my complacence.

Her depured and lusty rhetorick
My courage reformed, that was so lunatick,
My sorrow defeated, and my mind did modify,
And my dolorous heart began to pacify.
[Chap. XXVIII.]

The "Pastime of Pleasure" has been thrice printed; the first time by Winken de Worde, in 1517; again by John Wayland, in 1554; and by Richard Tottell, in 1555. Hawes's other works are, the "Temple of Glass," (which however is ascribed to Lydgate in the Pastime of Pleasure, cap XIV.) written, as it appears, in imitation of Chaucer's Temple of Fame: and a short poem consisting of a single sheet, and ornamented with a curious wooden cut, on the subject of the coronation of Henry VIII. and Katherine of Arragon. This last is preserved in the public library at Cambridge.*

* In Major Pearson's collection was "a compendious "story called the example of Vertue, in the which ye shall "find many goodly stories, and natural disputations, be-"tween four ladies, named Hardynes, Sapyence, Fortune, "and Nature: compiled by Stephen Hawes, and printed "by W. de Worde, 1530.

END OF VOL. I.

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